

AN
IMPARTIAL HISTORY
OF THE LATE
REVOLUTION IN FRANCE,
FROM
ITS COMMENCEMENT
TO THE
DEATH OF THE QUEEN,
AND THE
EXECUTION OF THE DEPUTIES
OF THE
GIRONDE PARTY.

IN TWO VOLUMES.

VOL. I.

PHILADELPHIA:

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AMONG the numerous publications which have appeared in England upon the subject of the French Revolution, it is a singular circumstance, that not one is to be found, deserving the name of History. The sketch which has been translated from the *Almanach Historique* of M. Rabaut is so extremely brief, that it does not even narrate the principal facts; and from the situation and circumstances of the author, it is necessarily partial, and may be considered rather as an oration or panegyric than as an historical narrative. The History of Baron Dillon proceeds no farther than the taking of the Bastille; and a work published in 1792, under the title of *An Historical Sketch of the French Revolution*, ends with the dissolution of the first assembly. The charge of gross partiality also applies to this last work; and we may venture to add, that the facts are in general very incorrectly stated.

It would be a deception upon the Public, with which the Authors would be extremely sorry to have occasion to charge themselves, were they to conceal that a considerable portion of the following pages has already appeared in the *New Annual Register*. The History of the French Revolution in that work was originally written with a view to a separate publication; and in the present volumes it appears in an improved and corrected state. The causes of the Revolution are also developed in an introductory chapter; and the narrative is continued to the present time, as well as the scattered and imperfect materials which have latterly reached this country would permit.

The

The reasons must be obvious, why the names of the Authors cannot be made public. The reader, however, may be assured, that the work has not suffered in any respect from this circumstance; but, on the contrary, that the utmost attention has been exerted to give it, what alone renders any history estimable, authenticity.

The Authors have presumed to affix to their title the epithet *Impartial*; and the reason is, because they cannot charge themselves with feeling the smallest bias to any party, but that of truth and liberty: and they flatter themselves, that their readers will find not only every circumstance fairly represented, but every censurable transaction, whoever were the authors or actors, marked in its proper colours. If it was necessary to make a declaration of their own principles, they would say, they are NEITHER TORY NOR REPUBLICAN—they love liberty as *English Whigs*, and execrate every criminal act by which so noble a cause is endangered or disgraced.

In the present ferment of the public mind, they cannot flatter themselves with the hope of seeing this claim universally acknowledged. On the contrary, they are well assured, that these pages will not be acceptable to the zealots of either party. But when time shall have dissipated the clouds of political deception, and appeased the tumult of the passions, they will with some confidence expect that verdict from public opinion, which candour and moderation seldom fail to receive. Let it be remembered, however, that though they would be thought impartial, they do not pretend to be *infallible*. It is impossible that among so considerable a mass of recent facts, some error and mistake should not occasionally be discovered. Of some events, the true causes cannot be known, and some have been doubtless misrepresented by the principal actors. They therefore earnestly entreat, that should these volumes fall into the hands of any persons who are capable of correcting any

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any part of the narrative, or of imparting any information of importance, they will communicate it to the publisher, and they may depend upon it, that the earliest opportunity will be taken to print the corrections, and bring them forward in the most convenient form to the Public.

One apology perhaps may be required. The history may appear too circumstantial in some instances in recording dates. The obvious answer is, that the book is intended as a book of facts, as a work that may occasionally be referred to with some degree of confidence. That, being the case, the Authors hope to stand excused, if they should be found guilty of having in a few instances sacrificed ornament at the shrine of utility.

In a Work compiled from so many different sources, it was found impossible to quote distinctly the authorities at the bottom of the page. To supply in some measure that defect, the following list of authorities is subjoined:

The Journals of Debates and decrees of the Constituent and Legislative Assembly, and of the National Convention; 90 vol. 8vo.

The Moniteur and the other newspapers of Paris.

The Courier de Londres, Morning Chronicle, and other English papers.

Histoire de la Revolution & Constitution Francoise, par deux Amis de la Liberté; 7 vol. 8vo.

Precis de l'Histoire de la Revolution, par J. P. Rabaut. Paris.

Histoire de la Conspiration de 10 Aout, 1792, par L. C. Bigot de St. Croix.

Compte Rendu au Ministre de la Guerre, par le Lieut. Gen. A. Dillon.

Compte Rendu à ses Concitoyens, par Jerome Pétion.

Derniers Tableaux de Paris, par M. Pelétier.

Mon Agonie.

Liste des Personnes des deux Sexes arrêtées et détenues

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tenues dans les différentes Prisons de Paris, 2 Septembre.

Another list published in Paris of the Persons massacred.

Baron Dillon's History of the French Revolution; 1 vol. 4to.

An Historical Sketch of the French Revolution; 8vo. London.

Miss Williams's Letters from Paris; 4 vol. 12mo.

Letters from Paris in 1791 and 1792; 2 vol. 8vo.

Dr. Moore's Journal; 2 vol. 8vo.

A Tour to the Theatre of War.

Fennel's Narrative.

D'Aumont's Narrative of the Proceedings relative to the Suspension of the King of the French.

James's Extenuation of the Conduct of the French Revolutionists.

The Trial of the King.

The Trial of the Queen.

The Manifesto of General Dumourier.

Besides a considerable mass of authentic original information, and the oral testimony of eye-witnesses,

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THE UNIVERSITY OF CHICAGO
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IMPARTIAL HISTORY, &c.

CHAP. I.

Reflections on the nature of the old government of France

—*The public burdens, and the consequent embarrassment of the finances, the sole cause of the revolution—State of France under Louis XIV.—Unexampled profusion of Louis XV.—Accession of Louis XVI.—Recall of the parliaments, &c.—State of the finances—Appointment of M. Turgot—Revolt of the British colonies in America—Imprudent measures of the French government on that occasion—M. Neckar's system of finance censured—M. Calonne—Opposition of the parliaments—Notables—Change of ministry—Banishment of the parliaments—Imprisonment of the duke d' Orleans and two other members—Projected plans of grand bailiwicks and cour pleniere—Notables convoked a second time—Resignation of the archbishop of Sens—Recall of M. Neckar—Resolution to convoke the states-general—Third convocation of Notables—Proceedings in that assembly and in council previous to the meeting of the states-general.*

BY a singular fatality, France, at once the most populous and the most enlightened nation on the continent of Europe, had remained under the yoke of despotic authority during the protracted period of more than one hundred and seventy years. It may indeed be doubted whether the servitude of the people might not be traced to a date still more remote, since the feudal

institutions were little calculated to promote the welfare of the community at large, and since that pernicious latitude of authority, which was latterly the exclusive inheritance of the monarch, had been previously in all probability only portioned out among an oppressive and rapacious nobility.

It would be a source of consolation to mankind, if we could lay it down as a maxim, that the extreme of tyranny is always productive of liberty; but the long depression of enslaved Rome, as well as more modern examples, forbid us to indulge the flattering speculation. It is however some discouragement to despotism, that, in certain circumstances, a revolution is commonly the consequence of great oppression; and that it is difficult, if not impossible, for a monarch to guard, by any artificial arrangements, the sanctuaries of arbitrary power.

History ancient or modern affords no instance of a country in which despotism was reduced to so complete a system as in France. The king levied taxes, by his sole authority, to a greater annual amount than are raised by the whole of those immense territories which compose the Germanic body. The people were studiously depressed by poverty, ignorance and extortion. They had no rights, or were carefully instructed never to claim them. Every private citizen was liable to be forced by the officers of government from his starving family to work in some corvée of public concern, or of absurd magnificence—He was taxed to more than half the amount of his income; and among these one of the most oppressive was the gabelle or salt-tax, by which he was forced to pay at an exorbitant rate for that necessary commodity, while he was neither allowed to purchase when he pleased, nor to ascertain the quantity, but both were left at the discretion of the farmers of the revenue.

Tyranny exercised upon the property of a nation must ever be accompanied with a tyranny against their persons. The king and his ministers possessed an unlimited power of imprisonment. Under the pretence of

preserving the public tranquillity against traitors and insurgents, the detestable invention of *lettres de cachet* was contrived : and this practice was carried to such a dreadful excess, that they were notoriously sold by the mistresses and favourites of the monarch, and even by their subordinate agents ; by which any person of the higher classes, for a pecuniary consideration, might gratify, to the full extent, his envy, his caprice, or his revenge.

The chain of despotism descended. The privileged orders, as they were called, the nobility and clergy, participated in the rapine and injustice of the court. The nobility were bribed to the support of this immense fabric of corruption and misery, by a complete exemption from all public contributions ; and their passions were gratified with the privilege of procuring *lettres de cachet*, upon most occasions, against those who offended or displeased them. The clergy are said to have been invested with nearly a fifth of the net produce of the whole kingdom, exclusive of estates of immense value.

The administration of justice was well calculated to assimilate with the rest of the system. The criminal trials were generally secret, and the state trials always so. But the most complete absurdity was, that men were not elevated to the bench of justice for their talents or their integrity, but the seats on those venerable tribunals were publicly and notoriously sold to the highest bidder ; and it is affirmed, that the decisions of the courts were scarcely less venal.

Gross and audacious as were these abuses, the authority by which they were supported was too well guarded to be easily overturned. A numerous mercenary army was always at the disposal of the king and his favourites ; a system of police, at once the most perfect and the most arbitrary that ever was devised, pervaded every part of the kingdom ; and a host of spies and informers, dispersed throughout the nation, rendered more effectual service to the cause of despotism than even the janizaries of the monarch.

That so stupendous an edifice of tyranny should ever be brought to destruction is the circumstance which ought chiefly to excite our surprise. It was formed for duration, and must have been permanent, had not the ambition of successive monarchs counteracted the arrangements of the corrupt, but ingenious authors of the system. The passion for war, and the practice of funding (which sooner or later must effect a violent change in all the governments of Europe), brought that of France to a premature destruction. Speculative men attribute too much to the diffusion of knowledge, when they ascribe to this cause the French revolution. The diffusion of knowledge may teach men to feel their wrongs, but it is the painful sense of oppression that will stimulate to resent them. The people in all countries are timid, patient, submissive; the slaves of habit, of interest, and of prejudice; and will endure much rather than risk every thing.

The prodigality of Louis XIV. was united with a magnificence which dazzled Europe by its splendour, and gratified that national vanity which has been considered for ages as characteristic of the French. He was succeeded by a prince who united in himself the opposite vices of avarice and prodigality. While immense sums were expended on the fruitless wars of the court, and scarcely less on that system of intrigue by which the cabinet of France affected to direct the affairs of Europe; while the public treasure was lavished upon prostitutes and panders*; the king had a private treasury of his own, in which he gratified his avarice with contemplating an accumulation of property, extorted by the most unjust means from the wretched peasantry of France.

Nature had formed the heart of Louis XVI. of the best materials, and from his first accession to power he appeared to make the happiness of his people, if not the principal, at least one of the great objects of his government: and had the state of the finances not been irretrievably bad, the reforms in administration which he effected would have immortalized his name. By

* "The pomp of the court of Louis XIV." says M. Rabaut, "was parsimony when compared with that of Louis XV."

disposition or by habit averse to pomp and parade, he could part without reluctance with every thing which had no farther object than to gratify those puerile passions. Yet the character of Louis has been generally mistaken, and one feature has been constantly overlooked. He was tenacious of power, and never parted with it but with extreme reluctance. This remark will meet with frequent confirmation in the course of this history; and indeed the misfortunes of his concluding years appear to have been greatly aggravated, if not in a measure created, by that circumstance.

The disgraceful system which had darkened the annals of France during the latter years of his grandfather's reign, though it might be supported under an aged monarch, to whom habit had reconciled his subjects, and whose declining years afforded a hope of a speedy change, could not be endured under a young king; and Louis had the sense to see that a change of measures was necessary, and the spirit to enter upon such a change. The duke d'Aiguillon, and all the faction of the countess du Barré, were silently removed; and the young king immediately recalled the count de Maurepas, the friend and confident of his father, whom the vicious policy of the late reign had banished from the court. This ancient statesman declined to accept of any ostensible office, but contented himself with a seat in the privy council, while the affairs of France were administered under his direction. The ostensible ministers were M. Miromesnil, who was appointed keeper of the seals; the count de Vergennes, who presided over the foreign department, and the count de Mury over that of war.

The recall and re-establishment of the parliaments, whom the fears or the resentment of the late government had banished, was rather a sacrifice to popularity than a spontaneous measure of the king; but the goodness of his heart was evidenced by his abolishing the horrid engine of tyranny, the question by torture; by the edict which commuted the punishment of deserters from death to slavery; and by the abolition of most of

the oppressive feudal privileges within his own domains.

A still bolder and more hazardous innovation was the disbanding of the mousquetaires, a corps selected from the most illustrious families for the guard of the royal person, but the insolence and expence of which were ill compensated by the appearance of superior dignity. This measure is commonly attributed to the advice of the count de St. Germain, and might be the dictate either of expedience or of policy. It, however, indicated the spirit of reform by which the government was actuated, and which, commencing with the court, was afterwards to be carried to an enthusiastical excess by the nation.

The disorder in which three fatal wars had involved the finances of the nation, and which the unexampled prodigality of his predecessor had increased, was, however, an evil not easily to be repaired. Nor was a rigid economy the characteristic of the court even of Louis XVI. However little disposed to habits of profusion the king might be in his own person, the expensive pleasures of the queen, and the uncommon splendour of the court, served rather to promote than to diminish the general distress. "Under thirty successive ministers," says Rabaut, "the court, ever craving and ever poor, had invented new resources. To imagine a new tax was considered as a stroke of genius, and the art of disguising it shewed the adroitness of the financier. We had already imported from Italy, under the auspices of our regents of the house of Medicis, the celebrated resource of farming out the taxes, the science of which consists in giving as little as you can to the state, in order to levy as much as you can upon the people. The sale of offices and commissions was likewise a tax levied upon pride and upon folly: their number increased every day. It is necessary to acquaint foreigners that, among us, was sold the exclusive right of exercising such or such professions, and that this right became a title. Patents were made out for carrying on the trade of a peruke-maker, of a coal-meter, of a

searcher of hogs' tongues; and these callings became exclusive; they were termed privileges. The rich purchased them as a speculation, and sold them to advantage. A certain financier had in his port-folio thirty patents for peruke-makers, which were bought of him at a high price by persons dwelling in the remotest provinces. Besides that this low kind of speculation changed the character of a people, where every thing, even honour, was become venal, these new-created offices were all so many indirect taxes; for the purchaser never failed to make the public reimburse him. It was injurious to industry, since, in order to exercise a profession, it was not necessary to have talents for it, but to be either rich already, or to borrow in order to become rich. In fine, it was an additional burden to the state, which paid the salary or the interest of every office that was sold. The number of them was enormous. A person who was employed to count them, and who grew weary of the task, ventured to estimate them at above three hundred thousand. Another calculated, that in the space of two centuries the people had been burdened with more than a hundred millions of new taxes, solely for the purpose of paying the interest of those offices."

In the appointment of M. Turgot to the department of finance, the king evinced his discernment or his docility. The commercial arrangements of the kingdom received the most valuable improvements under the guidance of this upright and able statesman; but his integrity was too inflexible, and his projects too extensive, not to excite the ever wakeful jealousy of the farmers general; and an accidental or artificial famine was made the instrument for depriving him of the public confidence. On his resignation he was succeeded by a M. Clugny, on whose death M. Taboreau des Reaux was appointed to the vacant post; and in a short time after, the king, whose attention appears to have been particularly directed to this object, associated with him M. Neckar, by birth a Swiss, and the first protestant, who, from the time of the revocation of the edict

of Nantz, had ever been elevated to an official situation of any consequence in France. M. Neckar had rendered himself conspicuous by several commercial plans, which he had successfully recommended to the mercantile part of the nation, and particularly by the adjustment of some differences which had taken place between the India company and the crown.

In the mean time a circumstance occurred, which, to a country burdened with debts and taxes, could only be productive of total ruin. The year 1774 will be memorable for the unfortunate war which the weakness and wickedness of a depraved and incapable ministry wantonly kindled between Great-Britain and her North American colonies---a war excited for the enforcing of a tax which would not have paid for collecting it; and levied under the absurd and fantastical plea, that the colonies were virtually represented in the British parliament, as by the ancient grants and charters they were constituted a portion of the manor of East Greenwich in Kent! If any thing could exceed the folly of the English ministry in commencing the war, it was that of France in engaging in it---Such, however, were the infatuated politics of both nations!

The old and detestable prejudice which taught the uninformed part of the people to regard a neighbouring nation as their *natural* enemies, was not less prevalent in France than in England; and the notion of distressing a rival while embarrassed with a domestic dispute, might in such circumstances be easily made popular. The old statesmen of France, accustomed to that meddling and intriguing scheme of politics which is ever desirous to interfere in the internal concerns of other nations, could not overlook the opportunity which the American war afforded. The queen, educated from infancy in an hereditary hatred to the English nation, and flattered by the glory which the French might achieve in the contest, soon embraced the American cause. The enlightened part of the nation were actuated by a more generous enthusiasm. Among all who read, and all who reflected in France, the cause of A-

merica appeared the cause of Liberty; and the efforts of some of the most illustrious individuals anticipated the arrangements of the court. The marquis de la Fayette, a young nobleman nearly allied to the illustrious house of Noailles, of large property, and not less remarkable for his accomplishments than his rank, fitted out, in an early stage of the dispute, a vessel at his own expence, and embarked for America, where he afterwards obtained a high station and considerable eminence and reputation in the continental army.

The court had no sooner taken a decided part in the American dispute, than that continent was considered as the theatre of glory; and the young nobility of France were emulous to distinguish themselves in the contest. There they imbibed principles which could only be fatal to a despotic government, while the progress of the war irrecoverably deranged the finances of the country. France indeed humbled her rival, but she ruined herself; and her imprudence will ever remain a warning to nations against incautiously rushing into unnecessary wars, and against that destructive system of politics, which involves the fate of kingdoms in concerns which are unconnected with their internal safety and prosperity.

Great as were M. Neckar's abilities, and unimpeachable as was his integrity, it may be doubted whether his mode of raising the supplies for the war was the most prudent or advantageous. According to his plan, one loan was made to pay the interest of another, and no new taxes were levied upon the people. The popularity of such a measure might, in M. Neckar's mind, counterbalance its improvidence; and indeed subsequent events may induce us to suspect, that, levied as the taxes then were in France, the privileged orders being wholly exempted, the people could scarcely bear any additional burdens. M. Neckar endeavoured to find resources in a most rigid economy, and in several salutary reforms in the household and in the different official departments: but his severity in this respect raised against him a formidable party in the court; and

several of his proposed reforms being represented as inconsistent with the royal dignity, he was dismissed from his office towards the close of the year 1781.

The return of peace in the succeeding year, though it relieved the nation from the apprehension of future embarrassments, did not extricate the public treasury from the existing difficulties. After M. Neckar, a series of empirics administered the finances, but with no salutary effect; and in the year 1783, the failure of the *caisse d'escompte* (or bank of discount) involved the commercial world equally with the court in perplexity and apprehension. This bank had been established in 1776, under the auspices of M. Turgot, by a company of private adventurers. Its capital was 500,000*l.* sterling, and its object was to discount commercial bills of short dates, at four per cent. The company were also empowered to issue notes to the amount of their capital, which circulated among the mercantile people like the notes of the bank of England. As the stock had risen above par, the surprise and consternation of the public were greatly excited by its sudden stoppage. The scarcity of specie was the cause assigned for this singular event; but the true cause of the failure was the immense loans which it had issued to government. Several expedients were tried by the ministry to relieve the embarrassments of the bank, and by the strong exertion of government it was enabled to maintain a tottering credit.

It was chiefly owing to the exertions of M. Calonne that the *caisse d'escompte* was enabled to support itself. This gentleman was the third who had succeeded to the office of comptroller of the finances from the dismissal of M. Neckar. He was confessedly a man of ability, and had filled successively the office of intendant of Metz, and of the province of Flanders and Artois. "The public however," says an elegant French writer, "saw with disgust and apprehension the wealth of the nation fall into the hands of a man who had dilapidated his own patrimony; a man who, inconsiderate in his character and immoral upon system, had dishonour-

ed his talents by his vices, and his dignities by the baseness of his conduct; who, while he exercised the office of procureur general of the parliament of Douay, had degraded himself so far as to act as the spy of the minister with respect to the procureur-general of the parliament of Britany, and had the insolence to sit as the judge of that respectable magistrate, whom he had calumniated; who, grown grey in the intrigues of gallantry and of the court, loaded with a weight of ignominy and of debt, came with a flock of needy sycophants to seize upon the treasures of the nation, and to devour its revenues under the pretence of administering them."

The first part of the career of M. Calonne was, notwithstanding, brilliant; but it was only a brilliant deception. After restoring the credit of the *caisse d'escompte*, one of his first measures was to establish a *caisse d'amortissement*, or sinking fund, which by a kind of ministerial juggle was in a certain course of years to discharge the whole national debt. While fresh loans were negociated every year, the public was deluded by inflated panegyrics on this heaven-born minister; and it was reported by his agents, that he had discovered the miraculous secret of discharging the debts and burdens of the nation by—borrowing!

While such were the plans and the promises of the minister, the court was never known so brilliant and so expensive. The immense debts of the princes of the blood were liquidated, pensions were granted with a profuse hand, and every petty service munificently requited. Rambouillet was purchased for the king; St. Cloud for the queen: all was magnificence and splendour. A French writer compares the delusion of the nation to a delightful vision, or rather an enchantment: "We slept," says he, "in the gardens of Armida; but the awakening was as terrible as the dream had been flattering."

It was impossible indeed that so miserable a deception could long escape the penetration of a nation so quick-sighted as the French. When the edict for registering the loan of 1785 was presented to the parliament of

Paris, that assembly was alarmed to find that it amounted to the enormous sum of 3,330,000*l.* sterling and the murmurs of the parliament were seconded by those of the people. The king however insisted peremptorily upon their compliance with his mandate; but when they registered the edict, it was accompanied with a resolution importing, "That public economy was the only genuine source of abundant revenue, the only means of providing for the necessities of the state, and of restoring that credit which borrowing had reduced to the brink of ruin."

The king forcibly erased the resolution from the records of the parliament; but the eyes of the public were now open, and a fresh deception was necessary to enable M. Calonne to retain his office, and protract the dreadful day of reckoning to a future period. The sanction of the parliaments the minister foresaw was not easily to be obtained; and even if he could accomplish this point, it was dubious whether that would be sufficient to remove every scruple from the public mind. An assembly more dignified and solemn in its character, and which should consist of a greater number of members from the different states of the realm, was necessary to give force and efficacy to his proceedings. But the states-general had never met since the year 1614; and from a popular assembly could M. Calonne hope for approbation?

Another assembly had occasionally been substituted instead of the states-general; and as it consisted of a number of persons of consequence, selected from the different orders and from different parts of the country by the king himself, it had been dignified by the appellation of the assembly of *notables*. They had been convened by Henry IV. and again by Louis XIII. and the minister very justly concluded that such a body was better adapted to his purposes than the states-general.

The proclamation for assembling the notables was issued on the 29th of December 1786, and the writs were directed to seven princes of the blood; nine dukes

and peers of France; eight field marshals; twenty-two nobles; eight counsellors of state; four masters of requests; eleven archbishops and bishops; thirty-seven heads of the law; twelve deputies of the pays d'état; the lieutenant civil; and twenty-five magistrates of different towns; in all one hundred and forty-four.

The meeting was at first fixed for the 29th of January 1787; but as the minister was not prepared, it was deferred to the 7th of February, and afterwards to a more distant period by the indisposition of M. Calonne himself and that of the count de Vergennes, first secretary of state, who died on the very day appointed for their meeting after these various procrastinations. M. de Vergennes was succeeded by the count de Montmorin, a nobleman of the first character, and who was less favourably disposed to the views of the comptroller general than his predecessor.

It has been shrewdly remarked, that M. Calonne convoked the notables not to discuss but to admire his plans; and in the measures which he adopted to secure their approbation we must applaud his ingenuity, if we cannot compliment him on his political integrity. The notables were divided into seven different bureaux, or sections, over each of which a prince of the blood presided. By the majority of the sections every question was to be decided; and thus the minister contrived that forty-four suffrages should constitute a majority of the whole; and we may reasonably conclude that he had disposed of his creatures in such a manner that more than this number was entirely at his command.

All his precautions however were in vain. The notables met on the 26th of February---it was impossible to conceal the monstrous deficit of 110 millions of livres. The minister attempted to throw the blame upon his predecessors; but M. Neckar had previously published his *Compte Rendu*, or general state of the finances on his dismissal from office; and this at least served to establish one fact, that the public affairs had not been improved in the hands of M. Calonne. In the archbishop of Toulouse the minister found a formi-

dable opponent, and one still more dangerous in the count de Mirabeau, who had formerly been in habits of intimacy with the comptroller general. As M. Calonne saw no remedy for the derangement of the finances, but the equalization of the taxes, his new plan excited at once the jealousy of the privileged orders. In the mean time the honest indignation of M. Mironmeuil the keeper of the seals, and the more subtle vengeance of his rival the baron de Breteuil, who was the favourite minister of the queen, were actively employed for his removal; and the storm of public resentment increasing in violence, he was at length obliged to resign a situation which by his duplicity he had disgraced. Before his removal, he had the address to procure from the king the dismissal of the keeper of the seals, and to recommend his friend M. Lamoignon to the vacant office. The baron de Breteuil he attempted to remove, but in vain—since the party which supported him was too powerful to be successfully opposed. The assembly of the notables was soon after dissolved.

The opposition of the archbishop of Toulouse to the plans of M. Calonne in the assembly of notables, was rewarded with the office which the latter had just vacated. But such was the hopeless state of France, that the new comptroller general was scarcely appointed, before he was engaged in similar difficulties with his predecessors. The king, disappointed in all the hopes with which he had flattered himself from the agency of the notables, had recourse to the ancient mode of raising supplies by royal edict; and the new taxes to be levied were a double poll-tax, a third twentieth, and a stamp-duty. The whole of these were strenuously opposed by the parliament of Paris, on the strong ground that they were more than the people could bear; and the king was obliged to enforce the registering of the edicts by the exercise of his absolute authority, and by holding what was called, under the ancient regimen, a bed of justice. Previous to this ceremony, however, the parliament made a spirited remonstrance against the edicts; and on the following

day a formal protest was entered against the forcible violation of their records.

The parliament for this offence was banished to Troyes; but purchased its recall by consenting to register the edict for the additional twentieth. Towards the close of the year, however, this ill-concerted harmony was again broken. The urgent necessities of the state required extraordinary resources. On the 7th of November 1787, in a very full meeting of the parliament, the king entered the assembly, and proposed a new edict for their approbation, authorising a loan of four hundred and fifty millions of livres, or near nineteen millions sterling; and this was accompanied with one of a more popular nature, viz. an edict for the re-establishment of the protestants in all their civil rights.

A long and interesting debate ensued upon these proposals; but the king, wearied with a contest of nearly nine hours, and possibly, chagrined at the freedom of some of the principal speakers, rose at length, and commanded the edicts to be registered without further opposition. To the astonishment of the king and the whole court party, this order was opposed by the duke d' Orleans, the first prince of the blood; who, considering the whole proceeding as an infringement on the rights of the parliament, protested against it, and his protest was confirmed by the unanimous voice of the assembly.

The succeeding day the duke d' Orleans received an order from court to confine himself to one of his seats fifteen leagues from Paris, where he was to receive no company except his own family; and M. M. Freteau and Sabatier, who had distinguished themselves in the debate, were seized under the authority of lettres de cachet, and conveyed to different prisons.

After much altercation between the parliament and the ministry, the king once more inclined to pacific measures, and the exiled members were set at liberty. But as the ministry were now fully convinced of the impacticability of the parliaments, they determined to

aim a decisive blow at their very existence. For this purpose two great projects were at once devised; the first was the establishment of a number of grand bailiwicks throughout the kingdom, which were calculated to diminish the jurisdiction, the credit and the profits of the parliaments; and the other was the creation of a *cour pleniére*, for the enregistering of the royal edicts, which must virtually destroy all their consequence in the state.

The *cour pleniére* was to be composed of princes of the blood, peers of France, magistrates, and military officers, to be nominated by the king. The project for its institution was kept a profound secret; the edict respecting it, as well as that of the grand bailiwicks, was to be presented to the different parliaments on the same day, in the beginning of May 1788; and for this purpose they were printed in the most private manner at Versailles.

The diligence and activity of M. d'Espremenil, a young and enterprising member of the parliament of Paris, detected the plot. He even procured copies of the edicts, and communicated them to his colleagues; and he and another spirited member, M. Monsfambert, excited them by the most pointed and energetic eloquence to a vigorous resistance. The king was now convinced that the moment was arrived when it was become necessary to employ force in support of his despotic authority. A body of troops surrounded the hall of justice, and the two obnoxious magistrates, M. M. d'Espremenil and Monsfambert, were carried off to the state prison of the Isle de St. Marguerite,* in the presence and amidst the murmurs of an indignant people.

The parliament remonstrated with redoubled confidence; and the voice of the people seconded their complaints. The king again found it necessary to convene the notables, and appeared in person in that assembly in the beginning of May. The object was to propose

* So celebrated for being the first prison of that unfortunate victim of tyranny, "the man in the iron mask."

for their approbation the establishment of the *cour plénière*; but the notables received the proposal with cold and silent respect; while the parliament protested with renewed vigour, and with unequivocal tokens of rooted aversion. The general discontent reached even the peers of France; and the minister (now raised from the see of Toulouse to the lucrative archbishopric of Sens) began to look round him with apprehension and despondency, and seriously to meditate a retreat from office.

It is to the credit of the archbishop that he advised the king to recall M. Neckar, as the only remedy for the public discontent; he and M. Lamoignon soon after resigned their respective situations: and the latter terminated his chagrin by putting an end to his existence.

A tumult of rejoicing, conducted with little decency on the part of the populace, and terminated with blood by the interference of the military, served to evince the sentiments of the people on the dismissal of the ministers. But the acclamations with which M. Neckar was received, could not eradicate from his mind the difficulties which he had to encounter. It was evident that all the former administrations had sunk under the weight of the public distress; and that some mode was to be devised which might give proper energy and effect to the extraordinary means which must be employed for its alleviation. The public sentiment, which a previous recommendation of the Parliament of Paris had excited, pointed out to M. Neckar the only measure which he could safely employ. The voice of the people had long demanded the assembling of the *states-general*. In this, upon different motives, all parties were agreed; and the court and the minister were obliged to give way, since no other means appeared of satisfying the creditors of the nation.

In the convoking of the *states*, however, a variety of opposite interests presented themselves to embarrass and distress the minister. On the one hand, it was obvious that the public affairs could only be regenerated by de-

stroying, if not in the whole, at least in a considerable degree, the unreasonable immunities of the privileged orders. The equalization of the taxes was the only measure, by which the nation could be made to endure the burden of the national debt; and on the other, should the scale preponderate in favour of the people, those excesses to which popular counsels are always exposed were to be apprehended and feared. On the great question therefore, respecting the number of the deputies to be sent by the different orders to the meeting of the states-general, the opinions of individuals were divided according to the interest of the parties which they respectively espoused; and the ministry themselves were far from decided. The general principles of equity seemed to dictate, that as the *tiers état*, or commons, so infinitely exceeded in number the whole body of the two other orders, the nobility and clergy, the number of their deputies should bear some proportion to the numbers whom they represented. On the contrary, it might easily be foreseen that such an arrangement virtually involved the ruin of the privileged orders, and perhaps the overthrow of monarchy itself. On so momentous a question the minister did not presume to decide, and it was agreed once more to convoke the assembly of the notables—though it was scarcely probable, that an assembly consisting entirely of privileged persons should decide peremptorily against the privileged orders.

The proclamation convoking the notables was dated on the fifth of October 1788, and the assembly met on the sixth of the following month. The motives assigned by the proclamation were, that the king could have desired to have adopted the model of the last assembly of the states-general, but that in various articles it could with difficulty be reconciled to the present situation of affairs, and that in others it had excited a dissatisfaction, the grounds of which deserved to be investigated; that the election of the *tiers état* had been confined to the towns called *bonnes villes*, to the exclusion of many others which had since grown confide-

able; that the inhabitants of the open country had in most cases sent no deputies; that the representatives of the towns were generally chosen by the corporations, whose officers at present came in by purchase; that almost all the representatives of the tiers état had been nobles; that the elections had been made by bailliages, every one of which had sent nearly the same number of deputies, though they had then been unequal in population and extent, and were now much more so; that the states general had divided themselves into twelve sections, called governments, by a majority of which every question was decided; but these governments were unequal, as well as the bailliages, a majority of which constituted the vote of the government; lastly, that a great portion of the time of the last states-general had been consumed in frivolous contests respecting their formation. Moved by these considerations, the king had thought that the discussion of them ought not to be confined to his privy council; and he had called together the same notables that had met in 1787, and whose nomination had been made for other purposes, that he might give the most striking proof of his impartiality.

The month of November was memorably distinguished in almost every part of the kingdom by popular meetings for the purpose of supporting the cause of the tiers état, and addresses were presented from the various towns and districts of Normandy, Guienne, Orleannois and Lorraine, demanding the establishment of particular states to regulate the affairs of these provinces, and a double representation in the states general. In Guienne the remonstrances were enforced by a considerable party from the other two orders. In Languedoc the institution of provincial states already existed, and the representation of the commons was equal to the sum of the other two; but the representatives had by long established practice derived their situation from the appointment of the crown, and not from the election of the people. Of consequence the inhabitants at large were unwilling that they should either engross or

obtain an eminent share in the farther prerogative of deputing to the states-general.

Brittany as well as Languedoc enjoyed the privilege of being regulated by its provincial states; but in this assembly the chief power was possessed by the nobility, and the commons had little influence. Brittany therefore, distinguished by her numerous and haughty nobility, and by the tumultuous spirit of her inhabitants, was a principal centre of rivalry and discontent. The various districts associated for the purpose of obtaining a melioration of their constitution; and upon the first appearance of this spirit, it was farther exasperated by the intemperate proceedings of the aristocracy. They early published a resolution by which they pretended to establish the following as incontestible maxims: that it was the essence of the states-general to be composed of three distinct orders, voting separately, and each possessing the same influence as either of the others; that the interests of each order were constitutionally secured by its negative on the determinations of the other two; that the nation itself, consisting of the three orders, ought never to destroy this parity of influence, every innovation upon which opened a door to tyranny, and could tend only to perpetuate anarchy and confusion; that the difference of population in the several bailliages was a trifling inconvenience, which the example of a neighbouring nation evinced to be scarcely worthy the attention of a free people; that the forms adopted in 1614 could be changed only by the authority of the states-general, an authority which the notables could not usurp without exposing themselves to general condemnation, and even bringing into question the legality of the future national assembly; lastly, that that minister, who should seek to sow dissention among the different orders of the state, could be regarded in no other light than as an enemy of the country.—Acting upon these intolerant principles, the noblesse applied to the military commander in Brittany to put an end to the associations of the tiers état; and some time after, the parliament of Rennes, having published a resolution

prohibiting the municipal assemblies, also called upon the military to put their resolution in execution. Government did not think proper to comply with these requisitions.

While the principles of liberty victoriously diffused themselves through every part of the kingdom, the people of Dauphiné who had hitherto been most forward in the cause, were not idle. In the midst of various pretensions advanced by different bodies in the nation, the chambers of commerce in several cities, and particularly in Paris, impressed with that monopolizing spirit which has hitherto been almost uniformly the offspring of mercantile habits, demanded the liberty of sending particular representatives for the protection of their trade. Like the rest of their countrymen, their admiration was excited by the patriotism of the Dauphinois, and they determined to consult the traders of Grenoble upon the justice of their claims. The answer they received was unfavourable to their views. "There is nothing," replied their correspondents, "that can excuse innovation, but the interest of the whole. The innovation you demand, the conceding to commerce particular representatives, would be an injury to the whole. Other professions would not fail to solicit the same indulgence. The husbandmen and the artisans, if it were to be the prize of utility, would have an incontrovertible claim. The states-general would be an assembly from the different corporations of the kingdom; rivalry and contention would reign triumphant. The good of the whole would be forgotten; all would be intrigue, anarchy and mistrust; and France would be irretrievably ruined."

The states of Dauphiné were assembled in due form in the beginning of December, and on the ninth of that month they concluded their deliberations upon the representation in the states-general. They earnestly recommended the union of provinces and orders, and the deliberating upon all public affairs in a single house. If the orders were separated, each would endeavour to maintain those abuses that were thought favourable to

it, and the emergencies of the state would be neglected; that patriotic enthusiasm, which dictated the most generous sacrifices, could not exist but among citizens occupied with the general good, and not with their particular interests. The notables would disappoint all the fairest hopes of the nation, if they proposed the separation of orders; and in that case they trusted the king would not hesitate to prefer the sentiment of the nation to the advice of that assembly. They added, that all men had a right to an equal participation of felicity; that it was not the provinces that ought to be represented, but their inhabitants; that, whatever might be their comparative riches or extent, the first thing it became men to consider was men; that, of consequence, population was the only measure by which representation ought to be apportioned; that, if one deputy were allotted to every twenty thousand persons, Dauphiné ought to send thirty-three, or rather thirty; and this was the quantity of representation they demanded. In adopting this measure they observed that they neglected their particular interests, since, when the states-general had voted by governments, Dauphiné had counted for a twelfth of the whole; but they hoped to be more truly happy, when the felicity should be general. They hoped, too, that the other provinces would recognise the purity of their motives, and that there would be no rivalry, but in contending who should contribute most to restore to the nation and the throne, that rank, glory and power they were intitled to enjoy.

It was in the midst of this effervescence of the commons of France, that the notables held their sittings; and it is not to be doubted that the action of each mutually produced some effect upon the other. The assembly was opened as usual by a speech from the king, the keeper of the seals, and the director-general of the finances. It was observed by M. Neckar, that the king was not ignorant of the respect that ought to be entertained for the ancient usages of a monarchy; it was under their protection that every constitutional right acquired a new degree of force; they secured the public

tranquility by opposing a barrier to the inconsiderate ardour of innovation. But the king was equally penetrated with those first principles of justice, that had neither epoch nor commencement, nor could have a conclusion; principles, that obliged him to acquire, through the medium of a just representation, a knowledge of the sentiments of his subjects. Circumstances had greatly changed since the meeting of the last states-general: and, while the king would always particularly distinguish the two first orders of the nation, he could not refuse his esteem to commerce and the arts, or deny an eminent share in his regard to the peaceable labours of agriculture. There were four considerations which it was particularly proper to recommend to the attention of the notables; the composition of the states-general, the forms of convoking them, the regulations that were to be prescribed in the conduct of the elections, and the instructions which the deputies were to receive from their electors. The first and third of these articles seem to be principally interesting. Under the first M. Neckar recommended to the notables to consider the total number of deputies, and the proportion to be assigned to each order. Under the third, what was to be admitted as the legal qualification of the elector and the elected; whether the tiers état should be authorised to select a representative from the superior orders; whether the orders in each district should proceed to the choice of their representatives separately or united; whether the elections should be conducted by poll or by ballot; and what principle should be employed in determining the number of representatives each district should be permitted to choose. These questions were afterwards modified by the notables. They did not directly admit into their list that of the total number of deputies; and they inserted the great and interesting problem, whether the future sittings of the national assembly should be in one body or in separate houses.

It was customary, upon occasions similar to this, for the heads of the different corps, the clergy, the no-

blesse and the parliaments, to address the sovereign in complimentary harangues. Accordingly M. d' Ormesson, who, upon the resignation of M. d' Aligre, had succeeded in due course of seniority to the dignity of first president of the parliament of Paris, embraced this opportunity of reminding the king, that that body had been among the first to urge the convocation of the states-general--a measure so salutary, as to have been no sooner started, than it was reinforced by the unanimous sentiment of the nation; and he could not avoid at this time repeating, that the parliament had already solemnly pronounced the model of 1614 to be the only one that could consistently be adopted, or that promised a salutary issue.

The king distributed the notables, as had been done in the beginning of 1787, into sections, with this difference only, that in the former instances they had been seven, and in the present they were six. Of consequence each of them consisted of twenty-five persons, and their presidents were severally, Monsieur the next brother to the king, the count d' Artois the younger brother, the duke d' Orleans, the prince of Condé, the duke of Bourbon his eldest son, and the prince of Conti. Though the exertions of the duke d' Orleans and of the marquis de la Fayette produced no striking effects upon the present occasion, it seems proper to record that the former of these, finding the sentiments of his own section little conformable to those he entertained, thought proper to absent himself from the notables, except upon certain interesting questions; and that the latter was a member of the section of the count d' Artois.

It was early visible that the notables were divided in their opinions, there being a small but respectable minority who embraced the cause of the people. The rest were highly aristocratical in their sentiments, and, beginning to be justly alarmed for the downfall of their usurpation, exerted themselves to the best of their power to resist the ruin by which they were about to be overtaken. The sections of the count d' Artois and

the duke of Bourbon earnestly recommended the model of 1614, and suggested a doubt, whether there was any power short of that of the states-general, deliberating by orders, that could superinduce upon it any material alteration. The sections of the duke d' Orleans and the princes Condé and Conti pleaded the same cause, though in a manner less peremptory. The section of Monsieur, in which a majority of the members had embraced the side of liberty, were fully persuaded of the propriety of the king's introducing whatever variation the welfare of the whole might appear to require.

The notables were nearly unanimous in the principles that ought to regulate the forms of election. The great body of electors were to be distributed into communautés, whose function it was to select a certain number of citizens to represent them in the secondary bailliage, the secondary bailliages to depute to the primary ones, and these last to fix upon the national representatives in the general assembly. This chain of deputation was applicable only to the tiers état; the superior orders were authorised immediately to elect their representatives to the national senate. In those provinces that were in the habit of being regulated by their provincial states, the states were to elect the representatives, at least in such of them as could prove that they were already in possession of that privilege.

In the section of Monsieur, the question of the proportional representation of the three orders was decided in favour of doubling the tiers état, by a majority of thirteen to twelve. In the sections d' Artois, d' Orleans, and Conti, the same principle was maintained by a minority of eight, eight, and six respectively. In the other two it was carried unanimously in favour of the aristocracy. The question of the deliberation in one or more houses was also variously decided. Three of the sections seemed to consider the deliberation by orders as an essential part of the constitution; those of d' Orleans and Bourbon required, that at least the first deliberation should be in the aristocratical form, the

states-general afterwards to adopt whatever form they thought proper; and the section of Monsieur declared the question to be altogether out of their province to determine. Upon the question whether the three orders should deliberate separately or united, in the election of deputies, the section of Monsieur pronounced entire liberty; and the other five prescribed a separate consultation, unless in any particular district it should appear that precedent decided in favour of the contrary.

From the composition of the states-general they proceeded to examine the rules of election. Under the head of qualifications the judgment of the sections of Monsieur, d' Artois, and Bourbon was considerably liberal. The general spirit of that judgment was the proscription of all qualification; because there were, as they said, but three orders in the state, and it would be absolutely subversive of that principle to introduce subdivisions; because every Frenchman ought to have some share in deputing representatives to the national assembly; and because the only measure of eligibility in the persons chosen ought to be the confidence of their constituents. The section d' Artois, alone of the three, introduced as a modification, that the electors of the tiers état must be in actual possession of landed property. The remaining sections endeavoured to establish certain qualifications, though all of them rejected the idea of introducing either exclusion or proportion to the prejudice of the undignified clergy.

The article, in the decision of which the partisans of the commons had deeply interested themselves, whether the tiers état should be authorised to elect deputies from either of the superior orders, was by the sections of Monsieur, Condé and Bourbon, determined, as these partisans desired, in the negative; and the section of Monsieur assigned this flattering reason, that it was unjust to suppose that the tiers état could not in their own order discover candidates that were possessed of every suitable requisite. The decisions of the sections d' Artois and d' Orleans were directly the reverse of each

other, the former limiting the tiers état in the election of deputies to the bailliages, but pronouncing entire freedom in that to the states-general; and the latter admitting nobles to represent the tiers état in the bailliages, but requiring that the representative of the commons should be himself a commoner in the last result. The section of Conti alone delivered a judgment consonant to the enlarged principles of liberty. Ought not indeed the partisans of the tiers état to have recollected, that, if the people, when left to themselves, were blind enough to elect their enemies to watch over their safety, they would be able neither to understand nor maintain liberty, even if they were put in possession of it?

The more interesting question, whether the superior bailliages, some of which contained twelve thousand, and others six hundred thousand inhabitants, should elect the same number of deputies, was determined in the negative by the section of Monsieur, and in the affirmative by the other five. The inquiry respecting the mode of election by poll or by ballot, was by four of the sections decided in favour of an open poll; by the sections d'Artois and d'Orleans a poll was prescribed in the primary assemblies; but it was affirmed to be of great moment, that the ultimate election of deputies to the states-general should be conducted by the mode of ballot. Finally, the five junior sections anxiously expressed their readiness to submit to an equal participation of the burden of contributing to the public revenue; the section of Monsieur, which, in all the most interesting questions, had declared in favour of the popular cause, disdained to have recourse to an ostentation of generosity, which after the proceedings they adopted, would have been altogether superfluous.

The proceedings of the notables were aristocratical, but moderate; and did not therefore satisfy the desires of those who began to be seriously alarmed for the impending revolution. The daring language of such as from the press or in the municipal assemblies pleaded the cause of the democracy, inspired them with horror.

The prince of Conti, in a general committee of the notables on the 28th of November, was the first to unfurl the standard of aristocratical jealousy. Upon this occasion he read and delivered a note to Monsieur, president of the committee, declaring that he owed it to his conscience, his birth, and the present crisis of public affairs, to enter his protest against the inundation that existed of scandalous publications, that spread through every part of the kingdom, trouble and division. The monarchy was attacked! a blow was aimed at its existence! and the moment was at hand! It was impossible that the king should not at length open his eyes, and that his brothers should not call upon him to do so. It was necessary to the stability of the throne, of the laws and of order, that all new systems should be for ever proscribed, and that the constitution and the ancient forms should be preserved in their integrity. The note of the prince of Conti was laid by Monsieur before the king, who returned it with an intimation, that the subject of it was totally foreign to those for the discussion of which the notables had been assembled; that he therefore forbade the sections to take it into their consideration; and that the princes of the blood ought to address themselves directly to him, when they had any thing to communicate which they conceived would be useful to him.

The notables were dissolved on the 12th of December, and two days after that event a memorial was presented to the king by the princes of the blood who had sat in that assembly, with the exception of Monsieur and the duke d'Orleans, enforcing the representation of the prince of Conti. They affirmed, that the state was in instant danger; that a revolution was gradually taking place in the principles of government; and that the present fermentation of men's minds furnished the means by which it was to be effected. Institutions, hitherto reputed sacred, and by which the monarchy had flourished for ages, were now disputed as problematical, or decried as unjust. The publications that had appeared during the sitting of the notables, the memori-

als that had been formed by different provinces; cities and corps, their object and their style, announced a regular system of insubordination, and a determined contempt for the laws of the state. Every author erected himself into a legislator. Eloquence and an art of writing, without information, without study and without experience, were thought qualifications sufficient for men to regulate the fate of empires. Whoever advanced a daring proposition, whoever proposed innovation, was certain to have readers and followers. Such was the tremendous progress of this effervescence, that opinions, which a short time since would have been deemed the most reprehensible, now appeared reasonable and just; and those, at which men of honour now started, would perhaps some time hence be regarded as perfectly legitimate and regular. Who could set bounds to the temerity of opinion? The rights of the throne had already been disputed; the rights of the two orders were now called in question; it had even been proposed to suppress the feudal lordships, as a system of oppression, and a remnant of barbarism; shortly the rights of property would be invaded, and the unequal distribution of wealth be considered as a matter deserving of reform. The princes added, that the claim of a double representation of the tiers état was the offspring of these systems of innovation, and ought to be perseveringly resisted. To grant it would be to encourage a spirit of encroachment; and its advocates, animated by their first success, would not content themselves with a concession, which, unless connected with something that was to follow, would prove altogether nominal and nugatory. A meeting of the dukes and peers of France, similar to that of the princes, was held on the 20th; but they contented themselves with publishing a resolution, by which they expressed their readiness to pay their full proportion to the national revenue, without demanding any pecuniary exemption.

The parliament of Paris appears to have exerted a foresight of a different character from that of the princes of the blood, and to have modelled its proceedings

accordingly. Those of the princes were full of ardour and adventure; those of the parliament were infected with timidity. The former seemed prepared to sacrifice every thing to the unlimited assertion of the prerogatives to which they were born; the latter, if they were unable to preserve the whole, were willing to make as good a bargain as they could. The younger members that guided their deliberations, had tasted of the intoxicating draught of popular applause, M. d'Espreménil and others had been received with shouts at the re-assembling of their corps after the period of their vacation; and they could not persuade themselves lightly to part with that public favour which had been so particularly grateful to them.

The vacation of the parliament expired on the 12th of November; but it was not usual with that body to enter immediately upon the transaction of business, and accordingly it was not till the 5th of December that they adopted the resolution, by which they endeavoured to qualify their intolerant language of the preceding months. In this resolution they expressed their alarms for the consequences of the present ferment, and of the manœuvres employed by ill-intentioned persons to deprive the nation of the fruits of the efforts of the magistracy, and to substitute anarchy and sedition in the room of the acquisition of a just and generous liberty. They recommended, as the most desirable of all preliminaries, harmony between the different orders; and they regretted that they should have been themselves so much misunderstood in their selection of the model of 1614. By this selection they had undoubtedly intended to point out the mode of convocation by bailliauges as preferable to all others; but they were neither empowered nor had designed to put any restriction upon the confidence of the electors; and with respect to the proportion of representatives for the three orders, as it was undetermined either by law or any constant usage, they had always meant to refer to the discretion of the sovereign the choice of such measures as might best accord with reason, with liberty, with justice, and

with the national sentiment. To quiet the perturbation that at present existed, the parliament begged leave to recommend to the king to convoke the states-general as speedily as possible, and, previously to that convocation, to sanction and consecrate the following fundamental principles: the periodical assembling of this national body; their right to mortgage in perpetuity to the public creditors the produce of certain taxes; their obligation towards their constituents to grant no other taxes but for a definite time, and to a given amount; their right expressly to appropriate the public money to the different services in which it should be employed; the resolution of the king to consent to the immediate abolition of all taxes bearing partially upon particular orders; the responsibility of ministers; the right of the states-general to accuse and impeach before the parliaments all national offenders, saving the privilege of the parliament's attorney-general to exercise the same function; the mutual relation between the states-general and the courts of law, so that the latter might not and could not suffer the levy of any tax, nor take part in the execution of any law of whatever sort or description, that had not previously been demanded or sanctioned by the former; the individual liberty of the citizen, to be secured by the obligation of the party arresting to commit him to a legal prison, and surrender him to the discretion of his natural judges; lastly, the legal liberty of the press, the only secure and ready resource of innocence against oppression, reserving a responsibility for reprehensible works after their publication, according to the exigence of the case.

An observation early suggested by this resolution of the parliament was, that, while they had enumerated most of the other privileges secured by the British constitution, they had carefully omitted the trial by jury; and indeed it is impossible to read their decision without remarking, that, at the same time that they were perfectly ready to concede all other prerogatives but their own, they spoke of these as matters of the highest consequence, and exalted themselves to a level with

all that prejudice admires, or reason teaches to be invaluable. A proceeding so specious and artificial obtained for them little credit with any party; and the court, which had lately seemed rather under the influence of resentment than policy, replied with haughtiness to their representations, that "with his parliament the king had nothing to discuss; it was with the assembled nation that he would concert such measures as might permanently consolidate the public order and the prosperity of the whole."

M. d'Espremenil published at this period a very brief disquisition, which may be regarded as the most authentic commentary upon the resolution of the 5th of December. According to him, the voting by separate orders was the constitution, and the voting in a single assembly the exception; an exception, to which it might be necessary to have recourse upon extraordinary cases, but which must always be adopted by the voluntary assent of the three orders. The fermentation that had been excited about doubling or not doubling the representation of the tiers état, was an example of perversity and malevolence that no history could parallel. In fact, he observed, all France was of one opinion. The clergy and nobility were willing to concede their pecuniary privileges; and this concession on the one hand, and the independence of orders on the other, were only wanting to render the nation happy and free. He was nevertheless of opinion, that the representation of the tiers état ought to be doubled: not to protect them against the aristocratical orders, there was no longer any contest between them; but because a full and numerous representation of the people was the best security against ministerial despotism, the common enemy of the sovereign and of every order in the state.

Whether it was that the parliamentary leaders were disappointed of the applause they expected to gain by their palinodia, or that they thought they had gone far enough in qualification, and it was now necessary to shew their impartiality, their next public proceeding was to burn by the hands of the common hangman a

pamphlet written in defence of the popular principles ; and the harangue, which it was usual upon such occasions for the attorney general to deliver, was full of vehement invectives against what he stiled the extravagant pretensions of the tiers état. In the same spirit they soon after summoned to their bar the author and printer of a petition, calling itself the petition of the inhabitants of Paris, and to which signatures were solicited by advertisements and circular letters. Having heard the parties, they issued a strict prohibition for the future against such advertisements, and the public exposition of petitions for signature, as contrary to good order, and capable of being applied by ill-intentioned persons to the worst of purposes.

It was never more necessary than upon the present occasion, that the executive government should interfere, and endeavour to compose the mutual jealousies and misunderstandings, which daily became wider and more angry, as the decision, uncertain in its issue, advanced nearer to a crisis. This decision was at length made public in the result of a council of the 27th of December, by which it was determined, that the number of deputies to the ensuing states-general should not fall short of a thousand ; that it should be apportioned with all practicable accuracy, conformably to the population and financial contributions of the different bailiages ; and that the representation of the tiers état should be equal to the sum of the representation of the other two orders.

C H A P. II.

State of parties previous to the meeting of the states-general—Riot at Paris—Assembly of the states—Contest with respect to the mode of voting by orders or by poll—The tiers état constitute themselves a national assembly—Assembly repulsed from the hall of the states—Take an oath never to separate till the constitution be settled—Royal session—Union of the orders—Projects of the court—Paris encircled with military—Soldiers released from prison by the populace—Famine in Paris—Remonstrance of the assembly—Dismission of M. Neckar—Disturbances at Paris—Firmness of the national assembly—The Bastille taken.

THE attention of all Europe was fixed on the meeting of the states-general, while the minds of the French themselves continued to be agitated by a variety of different and contending passions and opinions. Those, who were in possession of power, were desirous of retaining it; and those, who had no dependence but upon their abilities, hoped that a new constitution of things would elevate them to that rank, to which, from their merits, they conceived themselves entitled. The two great parties, which were afterwards to divide the nation, were already formed. The pertinacity, with which the privileged orders were determined to adhere to their peculiar advantages, is evident from what we have stated in the preceding chapter; and on the other hand, a multitude of writers of the greatest eminence were employed in exciting the tiers état to the assertion of its right. The claims of the nobility and clergy were examined with acuteness, with precision, with research. The balance of ability was greatly on the side of the people, and the usages of antiquity faded before the light of genius and of truth. Previous to this period, that extraordinary society or club* was form-

* The Jacobins.

ed, which has since had so considerable and so pernicious an influence over the public affairs. Its members instituted an active correspondence throughout the kingdom; and, by cultivating an uniformity of opinion on political subjects, produced, in time, that uniformity of will which afterwards appeared to govern the popular counsels.

The political schism which had already taken place, was not likely to be composed during the necessary turbulence of an election. Yet the system, on which the French elections were conducted, is less liable to tumult and disorder than where there is an open and immediate poll; and though the leaders of parties were sufficiently animated in the support of their particular sentiments, the great body of the people were either dubious of the consequences, or were not yet warmed in the contest. The meetings for the nomination of electors were not so numerously attended as might have been supposed; and even in some places, where a thousand votes were expected, not above fifty appeared.

The spirit of the two parties was manifested in the *cahiers* (or instructions to their representatives) which were drawn up on this occasion. The nobility and the clergy in their separate chambers digested their instructions, the first object of which was to preserve what they were pleased to consider as their own rights; the second, to demand the rights of the people. The monarch, according to this system, was the only devoted party; and with his rights the states-general might make as free as they pleased. All parties, however, agreed in renouncing a part of their pecuniary privileges. The instructions of the tiers état were hastily composed; but that uniformity of sentiment, which the sufferings of the people and the activity of their leaders had produced, was evident in them all. They demanded the suppression of more abuses than the national assembly was able in three years to destroy, more than perhaps ever can be eradicated; all, however, were unanimous in demanding a constitution, liberty, the assumption of natural rights, and the protection of the public treasure.

from the depredations of the court. The deputies of each order departed, thus instructed to maintain the claims of their particular party. "Those of the tiers état," says a distinguished member of the assembly, "carried with them the benedictions and the prayers of the multitude."

Such were the objects which occupied the reflecting part of the nation; but whatever might be the expectations of others, the favourites of the court could not fail to perceive that the violence of the storm would break upon their heads. The instructions which were dictated by the tiers état for the government of its representatives, the vast extent of its demands, and the number and ability of the publications in support of these demands, made them feel the necessity of opposing against that order the full force of every existing authority. M. Neckar was desirous that the states might be assembled at Paris; but the king preferred Versailles, where the communication between the members and the court would be more immediate. It is evident that the deputies of the tiers état, who were collected from every remote quarter of the kingdom, and many of them entirely unacquainted with the great world, assembled under considerable disadvantages, in a place where every thing bore the stamp of despotism, and where intrigue and venality had industriously spread their choicest allurements. The agents of the court had already established conferences at the house of Madame Polignac; and it is said by the democratic party, that the chief object of their deliberation was to unite the two principal orders, the clergy and nobles, and to retain the commons in a state of dependence and subjection. On the other hand, the deputies of the people were not without their jealousies; and those of each province held their separate meetings, till at length they became united in that of Brittany.

It is evident that the voting by orders, and not by poll, that is, the assembling of the different orders in their separate chambers, and investing each with the prerogative of putting a negative on the proceedings of

the other two, was the only stratagem which the court party could employ to disconcert the measures of the patriots; and it must be confessed, that such an arrangement would probably have rendered the whole proceedings of the states-general a solemn farce, and could never have established any substantial reform. This was the great question which was presently to involve the national representatives in faction and contest.

While these important affairs were in agitation, a circumstance occurred which is supposed on all parts to have originated in some malevolent motive, whether of a public or private nature is not so easy to decide. In the populous suburb of St. Antoine, a very considerable paper-manufactory was carried on, and a number of workmen consequently maintained, by a respectable citizen of the name of Reveillon. This gentleman had accused a certain abbé Roy, a dependant of the count d'Artois, of forgery, and the matter was before the courts. Whether, therefore, it arose from private revenge in the abbé, or whether the court party might imagine that a riot at Paris would afford a fair apology for the approach of such a number of troops as might effectually awe the representatives of the nation, is uncertain. A groundless report was maliciously spread, that M. Reveillon intended considerably to lower the wages of his workmen, that he had asserted the bread was too good for them, and that they might subsist as well upon potatoe flour—with many insinuations to the same effect. On the 27th of April, both the suburbs of St. Marc and St. Antoine were in motion, and M. Reveillon was burnt in effigy. The most extraordinary circumstance was, that it had been announced to the police, that the preceding days a number of strangers had entered the city, and these men were now the leaders of the insurrection, and, by profusely scattering money amongst the mob, increased both its numbers and its ferocity. A small detachment of the French guards was sent to effect their dispersion, but it was too weak to resist the rabble. At the dawn of the follow-

ing day, the outrages were renewed; and M. Reveillon's house was pillaged and destroyed. At length a formidable party of the military was ordered out, and, after a considerable carnage, the tumult was quelled.

Paris was scarcely recovered from the terror and apprehension which this insurrection occasioned, when the day appointed for the meeting of the states-general arrived. The 5th of May 1789 will be long memorable in the annals of France, and it was indeed a day of festivity to the whole nation. It commenced, agreeably to ancient custom, with a religious act. The representatives of the people, preceded by the clergy, and followed by the king, repaired to the temple of God, accompanied with an immense crowd, offering vows and prayers for success to their labours.

The whole ceremony indicated the distinction of orders, and evinced that it was the secret determination of the court strictly to maintain it. Faithful to the customs of 1614, the nobility were arrayed in a sumptuous robe, and the deputies of the commons in the habit of the law. Thus, while the nobility and the higher clergy glittered in gold and jewels, the representatives of the people appeared in mourning: but the spectators were not dazzled by splendid appearances; that body which represented the nation engrossed all its applause, and *Vive le tiers état!* was echoed from every quarter.

The assembly was opened by a speech from the throne, in which the monarch declared his satisfaction at seeing himself surrounded, after so long an interval, by the representatives of his people—he mentioned the heavy debt of the public, a part of which had accumulated during his own reign, but in an honourable cause—he hinted at the general disquiet and the love of innovation which had taken possession of the minds of the people; but depended on their wisdom and moderation in the adoption of alterations; and concluded by warm professions of his own attachment to the public welfare.

The speech of M. Barretin, the keeper of the seals,

was but little attended to. It, as well as that of the king, recommended temper in adopting alterations in the government; intimated, that the king had acceded to the wishes of his people in granting to the tiers état a double representation, but left the great question of voting by orders or by poll entirely undecided.

The attention which was refused to the keeper of the seals was most liberally accorded to M. Neckar, though his address continued for three hours. It did not, however, pass exempt from criticism—some alleged that it was an ill-arranged and ill-digested mass; the republicans complained that he did not enlarge sufficiently on their favourite topic; they expected it to be filled with projects and with systems: the privileged orders wished him to be more explicit in tracing out a plan of proceedings for the states-general: but all agreed that nothing could be more luminous and satisfactory than the details which he recited concerning the finances of the nation; nothing more simple and correct than the plans which he proposed.

The situation of M. Neckar, indeed, at this critical period, was peculiarly delicate. He was placed between the court and the people, at a time when it was impossible for an honest man to attend equally to the claims of each party. From him every thing was expected by the people, while it was impossible to comply with the plenitude of their demands. On the contrary, the love and admiration of the people was sufficient to render him suspected by the courtiers. He was despised by the high nobility, for his inferiority of birth and family; and he was odious to the bigoted clergy, because he was a protestant. Fortunately for M. Neckar, his integrity was above all suspicion; every person in the kingdom, from the monarch to the peasant, was satisfied of the rectitude of his heart. His temper and moderation were of the utmost importance in turbulent times. His influence frequently interposed against the excesses of popular infatuation; and the dignity and virtue of his character gave him consequence even with the enemies of liberty.

The first object of the states was the *verification of their powers*—that is, the production of their writs of return, and the identification of the deputies, which is equivalent to our members of parliament taking their seats. On this occasion the fatal contest between the three orders commenced. The deputies of the commons saw evidently that the people had in vain achieved their wish with respect to the number of representatives—in vain the deputies of the tiers état in number constituted a half of the states-general, if by the mode of voting they were to be reduced to a third. They saw further, that should the verification of their powers be effected in separate chambers, each order would then be constituted a legal assembly, and the union be rendered for ever impossible.

Thus the dispute which was of so much importance, concerning the voting by orders or by poll, commenced even upon the verification of the returns. At the appointed hour the deputies of the tiers état assembled in the common hall. After half an hour spent in that confusion to which so numerous an assembly was naturally liable, a voice more articulate than the rest proclaimed the necessity of order, and advised the appointment of a temporary president, a secretary, and clerks. When the chair was to be taken, the public voice demanded the oldest citizen—he presented himself, and asked of the assembly the assistance of some younger man to act as his herald. Some debates and motions succeeded this appointment; the general object of which was, that the orders should proceed to verify their powers in common, and not in separate chambers.

The debates of the clergy and nobility were not less tumultuous. In the first order, the members deliberated under the temporary presidency of the cardinal de la Rochefoucault, whether the powers should be verified and legitimated in the chamber appropriated to the order? One hundred and thirty-three members were for the affirmative; one hundred and fourteen were of opinion that this ceremony could only take place in the

general assembly, and before commissioners chosen from all the three orders.

In the second, M. de Montboisier, as the oldest nobleman present, was called to the chair. Two motions were made, one for the verification of the powers, by commissioners exclusively chosen from the order of nobility; and the other, for the same verification, before commissioners selected from the three orders. The principal argument in favour of the first of these opinions was, that the order themselves were the only judges competent to decide the legality of pretensions to nobility; and in answer it was urged, that the elections had been sanctioned by the three orders of each bailiwick, and the oaths administered in their presence. It was, however, determined in favour of the verification in their own chamber, by one hundred and eighty-eight voices against forty seven.

The commons, satisfied that a state of inaction would in a short time effect their wishes, determined to persevere. They carried their respect to this principle so far as not to open the addresses which were directed to the deputies of the tiers état, and which lay upon their table. The clergy also suspended the verification of their powers; but the nobility, who conceived that every thing was to give way to their rank and privileges, declared themselves a legal assembly, and on the 13th of May sent a deputation to the commons to acquaint them with these proceedings.

In the mean time, the clergy, who were divided in their opinions, and among whom the *cures** (or parochial clergy) were in general attached to the cause of the people, proposed to the other orders the nomination of commissioners to conciliate the present disputes. To this proposal the nobility assented; and in the assembly

* Mr. Burke and other Englishmen have strangely translated this word literally *curate*, whereas it strictly answers to the legal meaning of our word *parson*, and means an ecclesiastical person possessed of a benefice with cure (or care) of souls.

of the commons, it was moved by M. Rabaut de St. Etienne, a protestant clergyman, "that commissioners should be named to treat with the clergy and nobility concerning the union of the orders in one common assembly."—M. Chapellier, an advocate of Rennes in Brittany, followed it by a motion declaring "that no mode of conciliation could be admitted, which had not for its basis the deliberation of all the orders in common;" and censuring in strong terms the conduct of the nobility. The count de Mirabeau observed, "that the nobility commanded, while the clergy negotiated." He was therefore of opinion, that the commissioners should not treat with the nobles, but with the clergy only; but at length the simple proposition of M. Rabaut was adopted, with a trifling amendment.

It is almost unnecessary to add, that the negotiation proved fruitless. The nobility, having heard the report of the commissioners, voted, "that in the present assembly of the states-general, the powers should for this time be verified separately; and that the examination of the advantages or inconveniences resulting from this method should be referred to a future period, when the orders should take into consideration the future organization of the states-general." Thus every hope being defeated of a union with the nobles, the commons determined, on the 27th of May, to send a solemn deputation to the clergy, to invite them, "in the name of the God of peace, and of the true interest of the nation, to unite themselves with them in one general assembly, to consult together on the means of restoring unity and concord."

While this matter was in agitation, a letter was received from the king, desiring "that the conciliatory commissioners would meet in the presence of the keeper of the seals, and some other commissioners to be appointed by the monarch, in order to renew their conferences, &c." In the mean time the chamber of the nobles (this sovereign legislative chamber, as it was called by one of its members) passed a decree, asserting, "that they regarded as a part of the constitution,

the division of orders, and their respective veto, and that in these principles they were determined to persevere." The second conferences therefore were equally unsuccessful with the first.

In the course of these conferences, however, the ministers proposed on the part of the king, a plan of conciliation, or rather of arbitration; the principal articles of which were,

1st. That the three orders should verify their powers separately, and should reciprocally communicate the same to each other.

2d. That in case any contests should arise, commissioners should be appointed from the three orders to take the same into consideration, and report their opinions to their different orders.

3d. That should the three orders not agree upon any topic in dispute, the final determination should be referred to the king.

The two superior orders applauded this plan of conciliation; but while the nobles pretended to accept it, they qualified their acquiescence with a decided resolution to adhere to their former decree, and to the plan of voting only by orders. At the same time they proceeded to the verification of the powers, to determine the controverted returns, &c.

While these affairs were transacting among the nobles, the clergy sent a deputation to the tiers état, lamenting the high price of bread, and proposing a committee of the three orders to concert on the means of alleviating this evil. This proceeding of the clergy was represented by some members as deeply insidious, as a means of ingratiating themselves with the people, and of rendering the deputies of the commons unpopular should they refuse to co-operate. It was therefore immediately resolved to return for answer the following address:—

"Penetrated with the same zeal as yourselves, and viewing with tears of compassion the public distress, we beseech and conjure you to unite with us immediately

in the common hall, to consult the means of remedying these calamities."

It was now near five weeks since the states-general had assembled, and the three orders found themselves in the same inactive state as at first. The commons therefore conceived it was full time to emerge from this criminal inactivity, and to afford an opportunity to those of the nobility and clergy who professed a sincere love for their country, to become active in its favour. They divided themselves into twenty committees, to facilitate the public business; and on the 10th of June, the abbé Sieyes proposed that they should make a last effort for a union of the orders; and should this fail, that they should then form themselves into an *active assembly*, for the dispatch of business.

In consequence of this proposal, notice was sent on the 12th, that they would immediately order a general call of the deputies of all the bailiwicks, including those of the privileged classes; and in default of their appearance, that they would proceed to the verification of the powers, and to every other public object, as well in the absence as in the presence of the nobility and clergy.

On the 13th, they proceeded to the call of the deputies, and to the verification of the returns. Not one of the nobility appeared; but on the call of the Bailiwick of Poitou, three curés, Messrs. Cefve, Ballard, and Jalot, presented themselves with the writs of their return, which they laid respectfully upon the table. These venerable pastors were received with the warmest transports of joy and acclamation. They had declared their intentions the preceding evening in the chamber of the clergy; and they were followed the next day by five more of their brethren, among whom were Messrs. Dillon, Gregoire, and Bodineau.

In the mean time the unpopularity of the nobility increased almost to detestation, and to their obstinacy the inactivity of the states was wholly attributed. At length the deputies of the people felt themselves supported by the public opinion, and on the 17th of June proceeded

to the daring step of assuming to themselves the legislative government. On that memorable day, in the midst of an immense concourse of spectators, the deputies of the people, with such of the clergy as had already joined them, announced themselves to the public by the since celebrated denomination of the *national assembly*. The hall re-echoed with the exclamations of joy—"Long live the king and the national assembly!" But when the representatives of the people rose in solemn silence to take the oath to fulfil with fidelity their duty, every eye was melted into tears, and the enthusiasm of liberty took possession of every heart. This solemn ceremony was succeeded by the nomination of M. Bailly to the office of president for four days only, and that of Messrs. Camus and Pison de Galand as secretaries for the same space of time.

The first resolutions of the assembly, while they were declaratory of the constitutional power vested in the representatives of the people, had also a regard to the urgent necessities of the state. They pronounced "all levies, imposts or taxes unconstitutional, which were not enacted by the formal consent of the representatives of the nation; that consequently the existing taxes were illegal and null; that notwithstanding this, they, in the name of the nation, gave a temporary sanction to the present taxes and levies, which were to continue to be levied in the manner they had hitherto been, only until the separation of the assembly, from whatever cause that might happen." The assembly proceeded to declare, "that as soon as, in concert with his majesty, it should be able to fix and determine the principles of national regeneration, it would take into formal consideration the *national debt*, placing from the present moment the creditors of the state under the safeguard of the honour and faith of the French nation." These decrees conclude with a resolution to inquire into the causes of the scarcity which at that period afflicted the kingdom, and into the means of remedying and averting that calamity.

The firm and temperate conduct of the national as-

sembly awed at first, but did not entirely disconcert the aristocratic party, which assiduously employed every artifice to elude the blow with which they were threatened. The chamber of the clergy had been engaged for some days in discussing the manner in which they should verify their powers; and a number of curés had, during the discussion, presented their writs or titles to the assembly, and returned to their own chamber to defend the popular cause. At length, on the 19th of June, a majority of that body voted for the verification of their powers in common with the national assembly; which so much alarmed the court party, that it is confidently reported that M. d'Espremenil proposed, in the chamber of the nobles, an address to the king, beseeching him to dissolve the states-general.

The court was then at Marly, and M. Neckar, engaged with a dying sister, left the king exposed to every stratagem that was spread for him by the unprincipled courtiers. Repeated councils were held, the result of which could not be very favourable to the views of the people: at last the king was impressed with the necessity of commanding the advance of an immense military force to the capital; and both the object and the consequences seemed to countenance the opinion that the designs of the party did not end there.

However this may be, the friends of liberty and humanity cannot sufficiently regret that the king, from the first, did not enter upon a more uniform tenor of conduct. The wavering politics of the court served to cast a suspicion upon all its designs. Either the king should at first have resisted the convoking of the states-general (which however, in the actual circumstances of France, would, possibly, not have prevented a rebellion), or, from the moment of their meeting, he should have adopted every popular measure, and depended upon nothing but public opinion for the support of his authority. Among those who appeared most forward in favour of liberty, it is impossible that many profligate and dangerous characters should not have insinuated themselves; but it was the ill conduct of the court only

which enabled them to put in execution their wicked designs.

On Saturday the 20th of June, the day on which the clergy were to unite themselves to the national assembly, the heralds proclaimed a royal session; and a detachment of the guards surrounded the hall of the states, in order, as it was alledged, that it might be properly prepared for the reception of the king. The president and members were repulsed from the door, and acquainted by the commanding officer, that his orders were "to admit no person into the hall of the states-general."—"And I protest against these orders," replied the president, "and the assembly shall take cognizance of them."

Supported as they perceived themselves to be by the voice of the people, the assembly were not to be discouraged by this puerile expedient. On the motion of M. Bailly, they immediately adjourned to a tennis-court situated in the street of old Versailles, where, in the presence of applauding thousands, they took a solemn oath, "never to separate till the constitution should be completed."

On the 22d another proclamation was issued, intimating, that the royal session was deferred till the succeeding day; and the hall of the states-general still remained closed, on account of the preparations. The assembly wandered from place to place, before they could find a roof capacious enough to shelter so considerable a body. They at length assembled in the church of St. Louis; and the majority of the clergy, amounting to 149, assembled in the choir. After a deputation to arrange the ceremonials, the doors of the choir were thrown open; the clergy advanced with their president the archbishop of Vienne at their head, and the deputies cordially embraced each other. The sanctity of the place contributed to render the meeting more solemn and affecting, and the plaudits of the spectators testified at once their triumph and their joy. Two nobles of Dauphiné, the marquis de Blacon, and the count d'Agoult, attended at the same time to present their

powers; the rest of the minority of the first order waited the result of the royal session.

The events which had taken place at Versailles, and the change which they announced in the dispositions of the government, with respect to the national assembly, excited at Paris the utmost consternation. Nor could a letter from M. Neckar to the magistrates, assuring them that no such measure was intended as the dissolution of the states-general, entirely allay the ferment. The royal session took place on the 23d. It was at once attended with all that is awful, and all that is magnificent in arbitrary authority. The hall was surrounded with soldiers. The two privileged orders were seated; while the representatives of the people were left without, exposed for more than an hour to the rain. M. de Mirabeau urged the president to conduct the nation immediately to the presence of the king, or to demand at least that the gates should be opened. They were opened at length to the deputies, but not to the people. The throne was raised upon a kind of stage or platform at the bottom of the hall; on the right the clergy were seated, and on the left the nobility. The four heralds, with their king at arms, were stationed in the middle; and at the bottom of the platform was a table, round which the ministers were seated: one chair however was vacant, which should have been occupied by M. Neckar; nor did any part of this ill-conducted business excite more general disgust than the absence of that favourite minister.

The speech and declaration of the king were a singular mixture of patriotism and despotic authority. He spoke of the *favours which he conferred* upon his people; and caused to be read a declaration of his sovereign will, as if the legislature were only called to consent to such laws as should be proposed by the executive power, without being competent to propose any themselves. He suggested a plan of government, in which the distinction of orders was to be preserved, allowing them however occasionally to debate in common, with the king's approbation. Not a word was

advanced on the subject of the responsibility of ministers, nor on the participation of the states-general in the legislative power. The odious tyranny of *lettres de cachet* was formally announced to be continued, with only a few modifications. A guarded silence was observed concerning the liberty of the press, and the pernicious tax of lotteries. In fine, the king declared null the deliberations and resolves of the 17th, and ordered the deputies immediately to separate, and to appear before him on the following day.

When the king retired, he was followed by all the nobility, and by a part of the clergy. The deputies of the commons remained motionless on the benches, and preserved a gloomy silence. The marquis de Breze, grand-master of the ceremonies, entered the hall, and addressing himself to the president, "You know, sir," said he, "the intentions of the king." The president answered respectfully, that the assembly was not constituted to receive orders from any person; but the fervid Mirabeau, rising from his seat, and addressing himself to M. de Breze, replied, "The commons of France have determined to debate. We have heard the intentions, which have been suggested by the king; and you, who cannot be his agent at the states-general, you, who have here neither seat, nor voice, nor a right to speak, are not the person to remind us of his speech. Go tell your master, that we are here by the power of the people, and that nothing shall expel us but the bayonet." The enthusiasm of the assembly seconded that of the orator, and with one unanimous voice they declared that such was their determination.

The grand-master retired, and a profound silence pervaded the hall. It was at length broken by M. Camus, who declaimed against the royal session, which he stigmatized by the contemptuous appellation of a *bed of justice*, and proposed a resolution declaratory of the assembly's adherence to their former decrees, which he asserted no power could annul. He was warmly supported by Messrs. Barnave, Glaizen, Pethion, the abbé Gregoire, and many others. The abbé Sieyes

only observed, "Gentlemen, you are the same to-day, that you were before." The motion of M. Camus was unanimously decreed; and was followed by another, which pronounced "the persons of the deputies inviolable."

M. Neckar had several times solicited his dismissal, but was constantly refused by the king. When his majesty returned from the royal session, he was followed by a crowd of more than six thousand citizens, and the public discontent was manifested by murmurs and exclamations. The majority of the members of the assembly waited on M. Neckar, and conjured him to continue faithful to the nation and the king, and to remain in the ministry. The consternation however became general, when, at six in the evening, the queen sent for the director general of the finances, and through her apartments introduced him to the royal closet. At about half past six the minister came out of the palace on foot by a private door; but as soon as he appeared, there was a general shout of *Vive M. Neckar!* Some of the populace prostrated themselves on their knees, entreating him to remain with them as their father and their guide. He satisfied their importunities, by assuring them, that he would not abandon them; that he had pledged himself to the king, and was resolved to live or die with them.

The assembly met the next day, and were joined by the majority of the clergy; and on the 25th, forty-nine members of the nobility, with the duke d'Orleans at their head, made their appearance in the assembly. The rector of the university of Paris, and the prior of Marmontiers, came the same day to augment the number of the patriotic clergy. In the mean time, the dissidents among the privileged orders continued in a violent state of agitation; and M. d'Espremenil even accused the deputies of the tiers état of high treason. The archbishop of Paris, pressed by his connections into the service of a party which in his heart he condemned, passed at this period for one of the chiefs of the aristocratic cabal; and his house had been attacked

by a furious mob, who, however, were dispersed without mischief by a detachment of the guards. On the 26th he was introduced to the assembly by the archbishop of Bourdeaux. Some others of the superior clergy, and the count de Crecy, took their seats on the same day; and even in the chamber of the nobles, the union was again deliberated upon, and with less animosity than before.

In the midst of contending factions, which occasionally sported with his credulity or his fears, the king still appeared to preserve a genuine love of his people, and an unviolated regard to the claims of humanity. He felt himself unhappy at the divisions which existed, and determined to end them if possible at any expence. In a private conversation with the duke de Luxembourg, president of the chamber of nobles, he is said to have urged his wishes for a union of the orders. He was answered by that nobleman, That the order to which he belonged were not contending for themselves, but for the crown—he represented that the nobility was the only body, on which his majesty could depend to defeat the exorbitant claims of the people—that while the states-general continued divided, the royal authority was safe; but whenever the day should arrive that the states should vote by numbers only, from that moment the monarch was at their mercy.—“I conjure your majesty,” continued the duke, “to condescend to reflect upon what I have the honour to state.”—“M. de Luxembourg,” replied the king with firmness, “I have reflected, I am determined upon any sacrifice; nor will I that a single man lose his life in my cause.” In consequence of this determination, the king on the 27th sent a pressing letter to the president of the nobility, and to the minority of the clergy, entreating the union of the orders.—The clergy obeyed without hesitation; but it was not till after a very warm debate that the nobility submitted to the mandate of the sovereign. At the first news of this event, Versailles was transported with joy; the people ran in crowds to the palace, and demanded the king and queen. Their majesties

appeared at a balcony, and the atmosphere re-echoed with the shouts of *Vive le roi! Vive la reine!* A general illumination concluded the triumph of the day.

The union of the orders, however, instead of terminating their machinations, served but to increase the secret opposition of those who were likely to be the only sufferers by a reform of abuses in France; the courtiers and favourites who battered on its ruin. The dissolution of the assembly was now the only means which could restore to power these harpies of the state; and there is no cause to doubt that this was at least their first object. Whether the king was acquainted or not with the project is uncertain, but probably he was not. His fears and his passions were doubtless excited by the artful circle that surrounded him; every intemperate expression that escaped in the assembly was assiduously conveyed to his ears, and its object even magnified. The turbulence of the metropolis was made an excuse for besieging it with mercenary armies. Thirty-five thousand men had been gradually collected from the extremities of the kingdom, and stationed in the neighbourhood of Paris and Versailles. Camps were traced out for a still greater force; the lines of fortification were already drawn upon every eminence; and almost every post was occupied, which commanded the city, or the roads which communicated with it. These arrangements were made under the inspection and authority of marshal Broglio, an approved commander, a man habituated from his youth to the subordination of a military life, and generally supposed to be completely devoted to the party of the court.

It must be remarked, however, that if the enemies of the popular cause were thus active, its friends (whatever might be their motives, whether selfish or patriotic) were not deficient in vigilance and foresight. A just apprehension of what might happen, had certainly induced them to insert in the *cabiers*, or instructions of the tiers état, a clause insisting that the pay of the soldiers should be increased; and on the same ground there is reason to credit the reports of the aristocratic

writers, the democrats had taken every means to ingratiate themselves with the soldiery, and to persuade them that in that capacity they did not cease to be citizens; but that, on the contrary, it was degrading and dishonourable to them to be considered as mere automations, as passive instruments in the hands of power. Among the active *apostles of liberty*, as they are termed, who preached with such success to the military, the marquis de Valadi, formerly an officer in the French guards, is particularly noted. It was indeed absurd to suppose, that amidst the general spread of information, the soldiery should either want means of acquiring it, or be callous to its influence. So early, therefore, as the 23d of June, two companies of the grenadier guards had refused to fire upon the populace in some trifling riot. For this and other symptoms of disobedience the troops were confined to their barracks; but on the 25th and 26th they were seen by hundreds entering into the Palais Royal, the theatre of popular politics, and joining with the crowd in shouting *Vive le tiers état!* In the same manner all the military that entered Paris were conducted to the Palais Royal; they were loaded with favours and caresses by the populace, and heard with an attentive ear the declamations against the baseness of imbruing their hands in the blood of their fellow-citizens, and against the slavery of their present condition. The soldiers, melted into tenderness, exclaimed with ardour, *Vive la Nation!* and returned to their camp to extend the conquests of democracy. An incident happened on the 30th of June, which, while it evinced the dispositions of the nation and the soldiery, was probably not without its effects in attaching still more strongly the army to the people. About seven o'clock in the evening, a letter was brought to a coffee-house adjacent to the Palais Royal, intimating that eleven of the French guards were at that moment confined in the prisons of the abbey St. Germain, for having refused to fire on their fellow-citizens; and that the same night they were to be transferred to the dungeons of the Bicêtre, a place destined for the vilest miscreants.

Their cause was presently considered as the cause of the public; a mob was almost instantly collected, the prison was forced, and the dragoons and hussars which were called out to quell the riot grounded their arms. A foldier who had been committed for some other crime, was reconducted to prison by the populace, who declared that they would only take under their protection those who were the victims of patriotism.

The eleven prisoners, who had been thus taken from the abbey, were conducted by the people to the hotel de Geneve, where they were kept, as they expressed it, under the guard of the nation, while a deputation of twenty citizens of Paris was dispatched to the national assembly to solicit their pardon. After some deliberation, in which it was doubted whether the assembly ought to receive a deputation from persons not appearing in a public character, a decree was passed, recommending in strong terms to the citizens, a strict attention to peace and order, and promising to apply to the king, to whose province the matter in question entirely belonged, in favour of the soldiers. A deputation from the assembly accordingly waited on his majesty, who declared himself much satisfied with the decree of the assembly, and granted a free pardon to the prisoners.

In the mean time, Paris was not only threatened with the sword, but was actually visited with one of the severest calamities that can affect a country. A most alarming scarcity pervaded the whole kingdom; but it may well be conceived that its effects were most severely felt in the capital, which has no resources of its own, and in which the accumulation of human beings must necessarily increase the misery. The gates of the assembly were surrounded by famishing multitudes, beseeching their compassion and assistance. A committee of subsistence was formed, and various reports were received—prohibitions were issued against the exportation of corn, and a subscription was opened in Paris for the relief of the poor.

Under the pressure of such a calamity, it may well be supposed that the people were not in the most tran-

quil state. The general exclamation was for bread; and unfortunately the unsettled state of the metropolis afforded a daily excuse for the augmentation of the military in its neighbourhood, at a time when their presence served but to increase the general distress. The jealousy of the assembly was awakened farther, by observing, that for this service foreigners were preferred to the native troops; and that more soldiers were assembled round the hall of the states-general itself, than would have sufficed to repel a foreign invasion. On the 10th of July a spirited remonstrance to the king was proposed by the count de Mirabeau, and enforced by that commanding eloquence, of which he was master.

The address itself was a model of fine composition—It stated, that in consequence of the royal invitation to the assembly to give his majesty some proofs of its confidence, they now came to inform him of the alarms at present existing, though not among themselves—that they came, not to solicit his protection, for they entertained no fears—that in a recent instance, his majesty had seen the power which he possessed over the minds of the people—that the prisoners, to whom the populace had given liberty, had of themselves resumed their fetters, and a single word from the mouth of the king had restored the public tranquility—that such a sway was the only one which could now be exercised in France—that the danger from the assembling of the troops did not threaten the assembly, but the provinces, the capital, which might be jealous for their representatives—that the danger was for the troops themselves, who might be alienated from authority by their communication with the metropolis—for the labours of the assembly, which might be interrupted by popular commotions—and for the king himself. It concluded with expressing their own firmness, and beseeching his majesty to remove the troops, since a monarch adored by twenty-five millions of subjects could not possibly stand in need of foreign support.

The king's answer was cold and unsatisfactory. It alleged that the tumultuous conduct of the metropolis was the reason for having surrounded it with troops—disclaimed every idea of interrupting the freedom of the assembly's deliberations—but added, that if the presence of the troops gave umbrage, he was ready, at the request of the assembly, to transfer the states-general to Noyon or Soissons, and to repair himself to Compiègne in order to maintain the necessary communication with the assembly. This answer was applauded by some of the members; but its design could not escape the penetration of Mirabeau, who in a short speech detected its fallacy. "The answer of the king," said he, "is a direct refusal to our requisition—we will remove neither to Noyon nor to Soissons—we will not place ourselves between two hostile armies, that which is besieging Paris, and that which may fall upon us from Flanders and Alsace—we have not asked permission to run away from the troops; we have desired that the troops should be removed from the capital."

It is unfortunate for the memory of the late monarch, that no authentic documents have been produced to explain what were at this period the actual designs of the court. The democratic writers affirm, that a plan was actually concerted for the dissolution of the assembly, and the full resumption of despotic authority. They assert, that the night of the 14th or 15th of July was fixed upon for the attack of the metropolis, which was already besieged by fifty thousand men, and one hundred pieces of cannon. They describe the arrangement which was planned for the assault; and some of them add, that not only the dissolution of the assembly, but a dreadful and sanguinary execution of its most distinguished members was to succeed. However little we may be disposed to credit this statement, the least we can believe is, that, agreeably to the declaration in the royal session of the 23d of June, the authority, if not the very phantom, of the states-general was to be annihilated; and that something evil was intended, was most evident from the dismissal of M. Neckar, which

prematurely took place on the 11th of July. He was at dinner when the letter of the king, ordering him to quit the kingdom in twenty-four hours, was brought him by the count de la Luzerne. Without appearing in the least concerned, he had the presence of mind to tell the count, as he went out of the room, "We shall meet again at the council;" and continued to converse with the archbishop of Bourdeaux and the rest of the company that were dining with him, as if nothing had happened. About five o'clock in the afternoon he complained of a pain in his head, and asked madame Neckar, if she would accompany him in an airing. He was not more than a league from Versailles, when he desired the coachman to drive on more quickly to St. Ouen, his country house. He passed the night there, and prepared for the journey; and this was the first opportunity he had of acquainting his daughter the baroness de Stael with the event, though she was present when he received the order of the king to quit the country like a criminal. He took the road to Brussels, as the nearest frontier; and carried with him, says M. Rabaut, the confidence of the nation.

The new arrangements in the ministry were the marshal Broglio, minister of war; the baron de Breteuil, president of finance; M. de la Galeziere, comptroller-general; M. de la Porte, intendant of the war department; and M. Foulon, intendant of the navy.

It is impossible to describe the consternation which pervaded the whole city of Paris on the receipt of this afflicting intelligence. The person, who first reported it at the hôtel de Ville, was considered as a lunatic, and with difficulty escaped some harsh treatment. It was no sooner confirmed, than the shops and places of public amusement were all shut up. A body of citizens ran to the warehouse of a statuary, and having procured the busts of M. Neckar and the duke d'Orleans, dressed them in mourning, and carried them about the streets. In their progress they were stopped by a German regiment, the royal Allemand, when the busts were broken by the soldiers; one man lost his life, and

others of the populace were wounded. The army now came forward in force, with the prince de Lambesq, grand ecuyer of France, at their head, who was ordered to take post at the Tuilleries. Irritated, perhaps, at the spirit of resistance which he observed in the citizens, he imprudently wounded with his sabre a poor old man who was walking peaceably in the gardens. The French have a remarkable respect for age, and this wanton outrage proved the signal of revolt; an instantaneous alarm was spread through the city, and the cry of *To arms* resounded in every quarter. The Germans were vigorously attacked by the populace who were joined by the French guards, and, overpowered by numbers, were obliged to retreat. From that moment the guards took leave of their officers, they set fire to their several barracks, and formed themselves into companies with the citizens, to patrol the streets, and preserve, if possible, the public tranquillity.

The citizens of Paris at this moment beheld themselves in a most alarming and critical situation. Whether true or not, the reports of the intended attack upon the city were universally credited; and the mysterious and impolitic proceedings of the court gave countenance, it must be confessed, to every suspicion. On the other hand, troops of banditti, the pests of a populous city, such as are ever ready to take advantage of public commotion, were beginning to collect; and, either from these on the one hand, or the foreign soldiery on the other, a general pillage was the only event that could be expected. Covered by the darkness of the night, several bands of ruffians paraded the streets, and even set fire to the city in different places: the horrid silence was interrupted only by confused shouts, and occasional discharges of musquetry. In this disastrous night, sleep only sealed the eyes of infants; they alone reposed in peace, while their anxious parents watched over their cradles.

Verfailles was not more tranquil; but the court party, abandoning themselves to an indecent joy, concluded the evening of the 12th with a tumultuous banquet.

The women of the court mingled with the foreign soldiers in lascivious dances to the sound of the German music—their triumph, however, was not of long duration; a false report of 100,000 armed citizens being on the road to Versailles, joined to their mistrust of the national troops, gave at least a momentary check to their extravagant exultation.

The morning of the 13th displayed at Paris a most affecting spectacle of confusion and dismay; a band of villains had already pillaged the charitable house of St. Lazare; at six o'clock the alarm bells sounded throughout the city, and the terror became universal. The citizens assembled at the hôtel de Ville, and no alternative appeared for the protection of their lives and property, but that of embodying themselves, and forming a regular militia for the defence of the capital*. Sixty thousand citizens were soon enrolled, and marshalled under different commanders: the French guards spontaneously offered their services, and were distributed among the different companies. The standards of the city were displayed; trenches were thrown up, and barricadoes formed in different parts of the suburbs. Regulations were next established for the preservation of order, and a permanent council or committee, to sit night and day, was appointed. At about half past five in the afternoon this committee dispatched a deputation to acquaint the national assembly with the occurrences which had taken place at Paris.

The assembly had been engaged, from the day when they presented their address to the king, in framing a declaration of rights, and the plan of a constitution; and even in the midst of these alarms, they continued, without intermission, their patriotic labours. In the disgrace of M. Neckar they saw their own ruin determined; yet proceeded with a firmness tempered with moderation, a courage ennobled by dignity, which reflects on

* Such was at least the public pretext—the democratic party had it undoubtedly in view by this arrangement to be able more effectually to oppose the foreign soldiery.

their conduct immortal honour. In their debates they carefully drew the line, and distinguished between the prerogatives and functions of the legislative and those of the executive powers; and on receiving the intelligence that Paris was in a state of uproar and confusion, a deputation was dispatched to the king, informing him once more of the danger which threatened the state from the presence of the troops that invested the metropolis; entreating in the most pressing terms their removal; and offering to oppose their own persons to the impending storm, and to proceed immediately to Paris to assist, by their persuasion and authority, in the re-establishment of order and peace. The king remained immovable in his determination; he replied, "that he was the only judge of the necessity of removing the troops; that the presence of the deputies could be of no service in Paris; on the contrary, they were necessary at Versailles, to prosecute there those important labours which he should continue to recommend."

It is evident that the answer of the king could not by any means be agreeable to the assembly. It was therefore no sooner communicated than the marquis de la Fayette demanded an immediate declaration of the responsibility of ministers, and the assembly unanimously resolved:

"That M. Neckar and the rest of the late ministry carried with them the confidence and the regret of the assembly; that they would not cease to insist on the removal of the troops; that no intermediate power can exist between the king and the representatives of the nation; that the ministers and agents of authority civil and military are responsible to the people for their conduct; that the present ministers and counsellors of his majesty were personally responsible for the impending calamities, and all those which might be the consequences of their advice; that the assembly having placed the public debts under the safeguard of the honour and loyalty of the French nation, no power has a right even to pronounce the infamous word *bankruptcy*; that they persisted in all their former decrees; and that these

minutes should be presented to the king and the late ministry, and committed to the press."

The courage of the Parisians was answerable to the firmness of the national assembly. By the accession of the French guards, they had obtained a supply of arms and ammunition, and a considerable train of artillery; the shops of the armourers were ransacked for weapons, and the soldier-citizens were even trained to some appearance of discipline. The night of the 13th passed without any event of consequence; the morning discovered that, taking advantage of the darkness, the troops encamped in the Champs Elysées had moved off. The people, however, were ignorant of the causes of this removal, and an immediate attack was expected. The national guard, for that was the name which the mixed band of soldiers and citizens now assumed, amounted to the number of 150,000 men; but the majority were still without arms. The marquis de la Salle was named commander in chief; the green cockade, which they had at first adopted, was changed for the since famous national colours, red, blue, and white; the new army was now more regularly officered; and various deputations were dispatched in quest of arms and implements of war. M. de Fleffelles, the prévôt des marchands (or mayor), made many promises on this subject; but they all proved, like every part of his conduct, delusive.

In the course of their inquiries after arms, a party of more than 30,000, conducted by M. Ethis de Corny, repaired to the Hôtel des Invalides. M. Sombreuil, the governor, had received orders so early as on Sunday the 12th to hold himself in readiness for an attack, and his men had remained during the whole of Monday under arms, and on the morning of Tuesday he permitted them to take a few hours rest. At this moment M. de Corny arrived; and, on making known to the governor the object of his mission, he was answered, that the invalids had not any arms. M. Corny was re-conducted by M. Sombreuil to the gate; but it was no sooner opened than the multitude rushed in, in an

irresistible torrent, and in a few minutes ransacked every part of the hôtel. More than 30,000 muskets, and twenty pieces of cannon, were the fruit of this expedition. On the opposite side of the Seine a similar event occurred; there another party attacked the *garde-meuble de la couronne*, and from that ancient store an immense number of weapons of different kinds were procured.

It has been generally believed that the taking of the Bastille was the preconcerted effort of reviving liberty; but this was really not the case. Some of the most important actions, which have been achieved by courage or activity, have in their origin been directed by that imperceptible chain of events which human blindness terms accident or chance. Like the *Hôtel des Invalides*, the Bastille had from the first moment of the alarms in Paris been put in a state of defence. Fifteen pieces of cannon were mounted on the towers; and three field-pieces, loaded with grape and case shot, guarded the first gate. An immense quantity of powder and military stores had been brought from the arsenal, and distributed to the different corps; the mortars had been exercised, the draw-bridge and gates strengthened and repaired; the house of the governor himself was fortified, and guarded by light pieces of artillery. The shortness of the time had not permitted him to be equally provident in laying in a sufficient store of provisions. The forces which the fortress included were chiefly foreigners. On the morning of the 14th, several deputations had waited on the marquis de Launay, the governor, to demand arms and peace: they were courteously received by him, and he gave them the strongest assurances of his good intentions. Indeed it is said that he was himself averse to hostile measures, had he not been seduced by the perfidious counsels of the sieur Louis de Flue, commander of the Swiss guards, by the orders of the baron de Bezenval, and by the promises of M. de Fleffelles. The Swiss soldiers had even been engaged by an oath to fire on the invalids who were in the fortress, if they refused to obey the governor; and the invalids themselves, it is said, were in-

toxicated with a profusion of liquor which had been distributed among them.

At about eleven o'clock in the morning, M. de la Rosiere, a deputy of the district of St. Louis de la Culture, waited on the governor, and was accompanied by a mixed multitude of all descriptions. He entered alone into the house of the governor, and the people remained in the outer court. "I come, sir," said the deputy, "in the name of the nation, to represent to you, that the cannons which are levelled against the city from the towers of the Bastille have excited the most alarming apprehensions, and I must entreat that you will remove them." The governor replied, "that it was not in his power to remove the guns, as they had always been there, without an order from the king; that he would, however, dismount them, and turn them out of the embrasures." The deputy having with difficulty obtained leave from M. de Losme, major of the fortress, to enter into the interior court, summoned the officers and soldiers in the name of honour and their country to alter the direction of the guns, &c. and the whole of them, at the desire even of the governor, engaged themselves by oath to make no use of their arms, unless attacked. M. de la Rosiere, after having ascended one of the towers with M. de Launay, went out of the castle, promising to engage the citizens to send a part of the national guard to do the duty of the Bastille in conjunction with the troops.

The deputy had scarcely retired before a number of citizens approached the gate, and demanded arms and ammunition. As the majority of them were unarmed, and announced no hostile intention, M. de Launay made no difficulty of receiving them, and lowered the first drawbridge to admit them. The more determined of the party advanced to acquaint him with the object of their mission: but they had scarcely entered the first court, than the bridge was drawn up, and a general discharge of musketry destroyed the greater part of these unfortunate people.

The motives of the governor for this apparent act of perfidy have never been explained, and it cannot be sufficiently regretted that the intemperate vengeance of the populace did not allow him to enter on his defence before some impartial court. All, therefore, that can be said at present is, that its immediate effect was to raise the resentment of the people almost to phrensy. The instantaneous determination was to storm the fortress, and the execution was as vigorous as the resolution was daring. An immense multitude, armed with muskets, sabres, &c. rushed at once into the outer courts. A soldier of the name of Tournay climbed over the corps-de-garde, and leaped alone into the interior court. After searching in vain for the keys of the drawbridges in the corps-de-garde, he called out for a hatchet; he soon broke the locks and the bolts; and being seconded by the efforts of the people on the other side, the two drawbridges were immediately lowered. The people lost no time in making good their station, where for more than an hour they sustained a most severe fire from the garrison, and answered it with equal vigour.

During the contest, several deputations from the Hôtel de Ville appeared before the walls with flags of truce, intending to persuade the besieged to a peaceful surrender: but either they were not discovered amidst the general confusion, or, what is more probable, M. de Launay despaired of finding mercy at the hands of the populace, and still flattered himself with some delusive hope of deliverance. The guards, who now acted openly with the people, proved of essential service; and, by the advice of some of the veterans of this corps, three waggons loaded with straw were set on fire under the walls, the smoke of which interrupted the view, and consequently intercepted the aim of the besieged; while the assailants, being at a greater distance, were able to direct their fire to the battlements with an unerring aim. In the mean time the arsenal was stormed, and a most dreadful havoc was prevented there by the prudence and courage of M.

Humbert, who first mounted the towers of the Bastille : a hair-dresser was in the very act of setting fire to the magazine of powder, when M. Humbert, whose notice was attracted by the cries of a woman, knocked the desperado down with the butt end of his musket ; next, instantly seizing a barrel of salt-petre which had already caught fire, and turning it upside down, he was happy enough to extinguish it.

Nothing could equal the ardour and spirit of the besiegers : an immense crowd, as if unconscious of danger, filled the courts of the fortress in spite of the unremitted fire of the garrison, and even approached so near the towers, that M. de Launay himself frequently rolled large masses of stone from the platform upon their heads. Within, all was confusion and terror ; the officers themselves served at the guns, and discharged their firelocks in the ranks. But when the governor saw the assailants take possession of the first bridge, and draw up their cannon against the second, his courage then was changed into despair, and even his understanding appeared to be deranged. He rashly sought to bury himself under the enormous mass, which he had in vain attempted to defend. While a turnkey was engaged in distributing wine to the soldiers, he caught the match from one of the pieces of cannon, and ran to the magazine with an intention to set it on fire : but a subaltern of the name of Ferrand repulsed him with his bayonet. He then went down to the tour de la liberté, where he had deposited a quantity of powder : but here also he was opposed by the sieur Béguard another subaltern officer, who thus prevented an act of insanity which must have destroyed thousands of citizens, and with the Bastille would have infallibly blown up all the adjacent buildings, and a considerable part of the suburb of St. Antoine. De Launay at length proposed seriously to the garrison to blow up the fortress, as it was impossible they could hope for mercy from the mob. But he was answered by the soldiers, that they would rather perish than destroy in this insidious manner such a number of their fellow citizens. He then hung out

a white flag, intimating his desire to capitulate; and a Swiss officer would have addressed the assailants through one of the loop-holes of the drawbridge; but the hour was past, and the exasperated populace would attend to no offer of capitulation. Through the same opening he next displayed a paper, which the distance prevented the besiegers from reading. A person brought a plank, which was rested on the parapet, and poised by a number of others. The brave unknown advanced upon the plank; but just as he was ready to seize upon the paper, he received a musket shot, and fell into the ditch. He was followed by a young man of the name of Maillard, son to an officer of the chatelet, who was fortunate enough to reach the paper, the contents of which were—"We have twenty thousand pounds weight of gunpowder, and will blow up the garrison and all its environs, if you do not accept the capitulation."—M. Elie, an officer of the queen's regiment, who was invested with a kind of spontaneous authority, was for agreeing to terms; but the people indignantly rejected the very word capitulation, and immediately drew up to the spot three pieces of artillery.

The enemy now perceiving that the great bridge was going to be attacked, let down the small drawbridge, which was to the left of the entrance into the fortress. Messrs. Elie, Hulin, Maillard, Reole, Humbart, Tournay, and some others, leaped instantly on the bridge, and, securing the bolts, proceeded to the door. In the mean time the French guards, preserving their habitual coolness and discipline, formed a column on the other side of the bridge, to prevent the citizens from rushing upon it in too great numbers. An invalid came to open the gate behind the drawbridge, and asked the invaders what they wanted? "The surrender of the Bastille," they cried, and he permitted them to enter. The conquerors immediately lowered the great bridge, and the multitude entered without resistance—the invalids were ranged to the right, and the Swiss on the left hand, with their arms piled against the wall. They took off their hats, clapped their hands, and cried out

Bravo! as the besiegers entered. The first moments of this meeting passed in peace and reconciliation: but some soldiers on the platforms, ignorant of the surrender, unhappily fired upon the people; who suspecting a second act of perfidy, fell upon the invalids, two of whom, the unfortunate Beguard, who had prevented the governor from blowing up the Bastille, and another equally innocent, were dragged to the *Place de Grève*, and hanged*.

The sieurs Maillard, Cholat, Arné, and some others, dispute the honour of having first seized M. de Launay. He was not in an uniform, but in a plain grey frock: he had a cane in his hand, and would have killed himself with the sword that it contained, but the grenadier Arné wrested it out of his hand. He was escorted by Messrs. Hulin, Arné, Legris, Elie, and some others, and every effort was exerted by these patriots to save his life, but in vain:—they had scarcely arrived at the Hôtel de Ville before his defenders were overpowered, and even wounded by the enraged populace, and he fell under a thousand wounds. M. de Lofme Salbrai, his major, a gentleman distinguished for his virtues and his humanity, was also the victim of the popular fury. The marquis de Pelleport, who had been five years in the Bastille, and during that time had been treated by him with particular kindness, interposed to save him at the risk of his life, but was struck down by a hatchet, and M. de Lofme was instantly put to death. The heads of the governor and the major were struck off, and carried on pikes through the streets of the city. The rage of the populace would not have ended here—the invalids who defended the fortress would all have been

* This was the first instance of that rash and sanguinary spirit which has since disgraced the French nation in the eyes of all Europe. It is a singular fact, that the French have as yet no clear ideas of the administration of justice. Some time previous to the Revolution, an American gentleman who resided at Paris in a public capacity, observing the rising spirit of liberty among the people, remarked, "that they would obtain every blessing of a free government but the *trial by jury*; for that," added he, "they are not prepared."

sacrificed, had not the humanity of the French guards interposed, and insisted on their pardon.

The keys of the Bastille were carried to M. Brissot de Warville, who had been a few years before an inhabitant of these caverns of despotism; and a guard of three thousand men was appointed over the fortress till the council at the Hotel de Ville should decree its demolition. In the intoxication of success the prisoners were forgotten; and as the keys had been carried to Paris, the dungeons were forced open--seven prisoners only were found, three of whom had lost their reason, having been detained there as state prisoners from the reign of Louis XV.

Thus, by the irresistible enthusiasm of liberty, in a few hours was reduced that fortress which mercenary armies had considered as impregnable, and which had been in vain besieged by the force of the great Condé for upwards of three weeks.

The fate of M. de Launay involved that of M. de Flesselles, the prévôt des marchands. He had long been suspected of a design to betray the people; and all his actions indeed apparently tended to that point. In the pocket of M. de Launay a letter from him was said to be discovered, which contained these remarkable words—"I will amuse the Parisians with cockades and promises. Keep your station till the evening--you shall then have a reinforcement." At the sight of this letter the unfortunate de Flesselles was struck dumb. A voice was heard in the hall--"Begone, M. de Flesselles, you are a traitor." "I see," said he, "gentlemen, that I am not agreeable to you--I shall retire."--He hastened down the stairs; but as he crossed the Grève, accompanied by a number of persons to defend him, a young man, who had waited an opportunity, shot him with a pistol. His head was cut off, placed on a pike, and carried through the streets along with that of M. de Launay.

A tumultuous night succeeded this wonderful day; and the songs of joy and triumph which had celebrated the victory of the people, were converted into confused

whispers expressive only of anxiety and alarm. A report was spread that the troops were about to enter the city at the Barrier d'Enfer: thither the citizens crowded under the conduct of the French guards, and preceded by a train of artillery—the body of troops, however, that appeared in that quarter were dispersed by a single volley. The alarm-bells were then sounded; barricadoes were formed at the barriers; deep holes were dug in different parts, to prevent the approach of the cavalry; the tops of the houses were manned; a general illumination was ordered; and the silence of the night was interrupted by discharges of artillery, and by the warning voice of the patroles—"Citizens, do not go to bed; take care of your lights; we must see clearly this night."

The first news of the taking of the Bastille was regarded by the court as an imposture of the popular party*: it was, however, at length irresistibly confirm-

* The following pleasant dialogue on this occasion, is given as genuine in the entertaining letters of Miss Helen Maria Williams. The minister was, we have heard, the baron de Breteuil.

'A French gentleman, remarkable for his taciturnity and sang-froid, things that seldom enter into the composition of a Frenchman, had occasion to go from Paris to Versailles on that morning, in order to have a conference with the minister upon some private business. He found two of the ministers together; and when the particular object of his visit was discussed, one of the ministers said to him with a careless air, "Well, sir, are there still tumults at Paris?"

"The people talk of going to the garde-de-meubles," replied the gentleman.

"The garde-de-meubles!" repeated the minister: "what, the king's garde-de-meubles?"

"Yes, and they have already been at the Hotel des Invalides."

"And for what purpose?" said the minister, with increasing surprise.

"They seized upon all the arms," resumed the gentleman, preserving his sang-froid; "and if a man has two fuses he gives one to his neighbour."

"Well," said the minister, shrugging up his shoulders, "and what did they do next?"

"Why, I believe," said the gentleman, "they then went to the district."

"The district!" exclaimed the minister: "pray what is the district?"

ed. The first resolves of the ministry are said to have been desperate, and orders were issued to the commanders to push the projected movements with all possible vigour. In the dead of the night, marshal Broglie is said to have arrived to inform them that it was impossible to obey the mandate he had received of investing the hall of the national assembly with a train of artillery, as the soldiers would not comply with his orders. "Press then the siege of Paris," was the answer. The general replied, he could not depend on the army for the execution of that project.

The king was the only person in the palace who was kept totally ignorant of these transactions. The duke de Liancourt, a distinguished patriot, who was then master of the wardrobe, prevented the bloodshed which was apprehended: he forced his way in the middle of the night into the king's apartment, informed him of every circumstance, and announced to the count d'Artois that a price was set upon his head. The intelligence of the duke was supported by the authority of Monsieur, who accompanied him, and the king was immediately convinced that he had been deceived by evil counsels. Early the next morning the monarch appeared in the assembly, but without the pomp and parade of despotism. His address was affectionate and conciliatory. He lamented the disturbances at Paris; disavowed all consciousness of any meditated attack on

"An invention of yesterday," replied the gentleman: "the people have also another invention of the same date, I believe, which they call a permanent committee, and they have now got cannon."

"Cannon!" repeated the minister: "and pray what do they propose to do with cannon?"

"Why, they talk of taking the Bastille."

"Very good!--excellent!" said the minister, bursting into a violent fit of laughter: "this is really a pleasant conceit enough. And pray who is at the head of this rabble?"

"I really do not know," said the gentleman, coldly; "but all the people in Paris seem to be of the same mind."

"Well," said the minister, turning to his colleague, "I think we had better not mention these disagreeable matters to the king."

Notwithstanding this precaution, however, the king a few hours after was let into the whole secret."

the persons of the deputies ; and added, that he had issued orders for the immediate removal of the troops from the vicinity of the metropolis. It is impossible to express the feelings of the assembly on this affecting occasion. The tear of sympathy started into almost every eye. An expressive silence first pervaded the assembly, which presently was succeeded by a burst of applause and acclamation. The king rose to return to the palace ; and the deputies, by a sudden impulse, formed a train of loyalty, in which all distinction of orders was forgotten, and accompanied him to the royal apartments. The joy became general throughout Versailles ; the people flocked to the palace, where the queen, with the dauphin in her arms, shewed herself from a balcony. The music in the mean time played the pathetic air, *Où peuton être mieux qu'au sein de sa famille*, which was only interrupted by shouts of loyalty, and exclamations of joy. On their return to the hall, the assembly appointed a deputation to convey this happy intelligence to the metropolis.

C H A P. III.

State of Paris after the capture of the Bastille—Nomination of M. M. Bailly and La Fayette to the offices of Mayor of Paris, and commander in chief of the national guard—Te Deum sung at Paris in celebration of the taking of the Bastille—M. Neckar recalled—The king visits Paris—Dispersion of the ministry—Murder of M. M. Foulon and Berthier—Revolt in the provinces—Affair of Quincey—Persecution of the nobility—Private correspondence held sacred—Triumphant return of M. Neckar—Unpopular act of the electors of Paris—Outrages in the provinces—Abolition of the feudal system, &c.—Projected loans—Riot at Paris—Organization of the municipality and militia of the metropolis—Debates on the king's veto—On the permanence of the legislature—On two chambers—New scheme of finance—Dreadful insurrection of the 5th of October—The royal family remove from Versailles to Paris.

PARIS, which had been an unhappy scene of commotion, of terror, and of bloodshed, from the 12th of July, began on the 15th to assume some appearance of order and tranquillity. The livid and bloody heads were still carried about the streets as trophies of popular vengeance: but on the morning of that day a sensible citizen persuaded the multitude to listen to the voice of humanity, and they were thrown into the Seine. The electors at the Hôtel de Ville laboured incessantly in the organization of the civil establishment, and in the regulation of the city militia. The odious name of *Prévôt* was abolished; the more ancient and honourable appellation of Mayor was substituted in its place; and to this office M. Bailly, who had been president of the tiers état, was called by the unanimous voice of his fellow-citizens.

In our detail of the late proceedings of the national assembly, we omitted to notice, that the duc d'Orleans,

having been elected president of that body, had declined the honour, and that the venerable archbishop of Vienne had been chosen in his room. During the laborious sessions which succeeded the disgrace of M. Neckar, however, it was thought that his age and infirmities would scarcely allow him to exercise so difficult an office without the assistance of a younger person; and the marquis de la Fayette was unanimously nominated vice-president. A further distinction now awaited the disciple of Washington; and his services to the state, his disinterested patriotism, and his abilities, pointed him out to the citizens as the only man fit to be entrusted with the important commission of general and commander in chief of the national guard.

The troops, which had assembled on the Champ de Mars, had decamped during the night, leaving their tents and the greater part of their baggage behind them: but a spectacle still more interesting to the citizens soon presented itself:—this was a deputation of eighty-four of the most distinguished members of the national assembly, accompanied by an immense crowd, who covered the road from Versailles to the capital, and loaded them with blessings and the most unequivocal proofs of prodigal affection. On their arrival at the Hotel de Ville, the marquis de la Fayette, count Lally Tolendal, the marquis Clermont Tonnerre, the duc de Liancourt, and the archbishop of Paris, addressed the people.--- From this place they adjourned to the church of Notre Dame, where *Te Deum* was sung in celebration of the happy and cheerful return of peace accompanied with liberty. As they returned from the church, the acclamations of the populace were occasionally interrupted by the expression of two further demands, the wish of seeing their sovereign in Paris, and the recall of the patriotic ministry. The deputies returned in the evening to Versailles.

Public tranquillity, however, when interrupted by circumstances of such importance as those we have just related, is not so easily restored. It was natural that the people should be jealous for their newly acquired

liberties, and should view with suspicion transactions which in their intention were probably innocent. The ministry, which had shewn themselves so inimical to the cause of the people, were not yet dismissed, nor had the troops yet evacuated the environs of Paris; two fresh regiments had arrived at St. Denis; a strange and unsuccessful attack had even been made on the Bastille, by a serjeant and two companies of guards; and a convoy of flour had been intercepted by the orders of a person well known. The night of the 15th, therefore, was spent with the same anxiety, and with the same warlike preparations, as the preceding; and in the morning a fresh deputation was sent to the assembly, entreating them to interest themselves in procuring the dismissal of the ministry, and the recal of M. Neckar.

After a short debate, which chiefly respected the decorum of interfering with the appointments of the executive power, the assembly were on the point of voting a spirited address to the king, which had been proposed by Mirabeau, when they were informed that the ministers themselves had anticipated the wish of the assembly by giving in their resignations. The same evening, a letter from his majesty to M. Neckar, inviting him to return, was read by the president. It was received with the loudest acclamations, and was seconded by an address from the assembly themselves to that upright minister in the strongest terms of affection and respect. The king having at the same time intimated his intention of visiting Paris the following day, the assembly immediately decreed a deputation to convey this exhilarating intelligence, and to calm the disquietude that prevailed in the metropolis.

It was not without consternation that the king's determination to visit Paris was received at the palace of Versailles. Those who really loved him were apprehensive for his safety; those who had been guilty of malversation were apprehensive for themselves. Rumours of projected assassinations were spread, and the least consequence that could ensue was supposed to be the detention of the sovereign in Paris. The king

however, with a degree of courage and patriotism which does honour to his character, remained immovable in his determination. On the morning of the 17th he left Versailles, in a plain dress, and with no other equipage than two carriages with eight horses each; in the first of which he rode himself—a part of the national assembly, in their robes, accompanied him on foot; and the militia of Versailles composed his only guard till the procession arrived at the Seve, where they were relieved by the Paris militia, with the marquis de la Fayette at their head; and from this place the suite of the monarch amounted to about 20,000 men. The horse guards led the procession; and these were followed by the city cavalry: some battalions of the French guards and other foldiers, who had fought in defence of the nation, succeeded; then the different companies and corporations; and M. de la Fayette, with a large body of militia, brought up the rear. A quarter of an hour before the arrival of the king, whether from accident or malevolence is uncertain, a woman was shot by a musket-ball, from the opposite side of the river. The king looked pale and melancholy, and an expression of anxiety was even apparent in the faces of the national assembly. The progress was remarkably slow; and no shout was to be heard but *Vive la nation!* At the Barriere des Conferences, the king was met by M. Bailly, who acted as mayor, with the other magistrates. M. Bailly, on presenting the keys of the city, addressed his majesty in a short but elegant speech, the exordium of which was—"These, sir, are the keys which were presented to Henry IV. He came to reconquer his people; it is our happiness to have reconquered our king." At the Pont Neuf the passage was lined by a numerous train of artillery; but, in the true spirit of French gallantry, the mouths and touch-holes of the cannon were adorned with bouquets of flowers. On their arrival at the Hôtel de Ville, the king solemnly confirmed the election of M. Bailly and the marquis de la Fayette; and on receiving the complimentary addresses of the mayor, the president of electors, count

Lally Tolendal, &c. he exclaimed with an air of pathetic emotion, which scarcely allowed him utterance—"My people may always rely upon my affection." He received from the hands of the mayor the national cockade; and when he shewed himself at the window with this badge of patriotism, the joy of the people could no longer be restrained; the shout of *Vive le roi!* which had scarcely been heard in the former part of the day, filled the whole atmosphere, and resounded from one extremity of the city to the other. The return of the king to Versailles was a real triumph. The citizens, almost intoxicated with joy, surrounded his carriage; his countenance, which in the morning bore the aspect of melancholy, was now cheerful and smiling; and he appeared sincerely to partake in the general satisfaction.

The royal visit to Paris was the signal for the dispersion of the ministry. Marshal Broglie retired to Luxembourg; madame Polignac, in the habit of a waiting woman, took the route of Brussels; even the count d'Artois, with his family, withdrew during the stillness of the night, and was followed by the princes of Condé and Conti, the duke de Luxembourg, and others of the nobility. But of all who were connected with the court, none was more odious than M. Foulon, who had long been obnoxious to the people for his unfeeling tyranny and his insatiable avarice. This unfortunate person had risen from a very low situation in life to the possession of immense riches. He had been commissary to the army in the war of 1755, and by his rapacity and extortions is said to have irretrievably dishonoured the French name in the provinces of Germany. He is reported to have made a common boast of his depraved principles.—His favourite maxim was, that "that country would be best governed, where the common people should be compelled to feed upon grass;" and he had boasted, "that if ever it should be his good fortune to be minister, he would make the people live upon hay." On the first news of the riots in Paris he had withdrawn himself from the public eye,

and had caused a report of his death to be industriously circulated, and his funeral had even been performed in a manner suitable to his immense riches. In the mean time he had secretly retired to Vergy, an estate belonging to M. de Sartines, where he was in hopes of remaining concealed: but his character commanded no man's affection, and the general unfeelingness of his heart left him without a friend. His own vassals were the first to pursue and detect him; and on the 22d of July he was brought to Paris with a bundle of hay at his back, in allusion to the language which he is said to have employed in expressing his contempt for the people. The committee at the Hôtel de Ville determined to send him to the prison of the abbey St. Germain, where he might be detained till the return of tranquillity should afford him an impartial trial: but the immense crowd which was assembled in the Place de Grève resisted this determination. It was with difficulty M. Bailly could make himself heard, when he urged with all the eloquence of humanity the flagrant injustice of condemning a citizen to death without hearing him in his own defence.---The marquis de la Fayette took still more popular ground by urging the detention of the criminal, in the hope of obtaining from him a discovery of his accomplices. To this demand the populace appeared to assent by their tokens of applause: but the unhappy Foulon, whether in testimony of his innocence, or by a mechanical movement, clapped his hands at the same time in approbation. A general exclamation was immediately raised:—"They are conniving at his guilt; they intend to save him*." He was immediately seized, and dragged under the fatal lamp-iron, which during the revolution the populace had employed as the instrument of their vengeance. Every circumstance of horror attended his execution: the rope, by which he was

* The suspicious temper of the French, more than any one circumstance, has continued to undo them. The habits of finess and intrigue which a despotic government naturally produces are always attended with habitual suspicion.

suspended, broke twice; and he was detained for a quarter of an hour in a half-expiring state, before a new one could be procured. His head was cut off and placed upon a pike, with the mouth stuffed with hay, and was carried through the streets of Paris. This victim of popular fury was seventy-four years of age.

M. Berthier, who had married the daughter of M. Foulon, was implicated in the fate of his father-in-law, and was perhaps odious to the people from the exercise of an arbitrary and oppressive employment, that of intendant of police. He had been seized at Compiègne, and one of the electors, with four hundred horse, had been dispatched to conduct him to Paris. He also was accused of peculation and extortion, of being the principal agent in regulating the movements of the camp at St. Denis, and of the still more unpopular crime of speculating in grain, and contributing to the general scarcity. Unhappily for him, he arrived in Paris the very evening in which the populace had imbrued their hands in the blood of his relation; his death was therefore inevitable. If, however, he did not suffer innocently, he at least sustained his unhappy fate with courage and dignity. During the greater part of the way he conversed tranquilly with M. Riviere, the elector who accompanied him. When he entered the city, however, the bloody head of his father-in-law was presented to him, and at this dreadful sight he is said to have turned pale, and to have lost his fortitude. When interrogated at the Hôtel de Ville as to his conduct, he answered calmly: "That he had obeyed the orders of his superiors, and that the inspection of his papers would instruct them as to the extent of his guilt." It was determined to send him immediately to the Abbey; but it was impossible to penetrate the concourse of people that surrounded the Hôtel. It was in vain that M. Bailly opposed his utmost eloquence to the fury of the multitude; in vain the commander in chief prostrated himself on his knees to entreat that the popular cause should no more be defiled with blood. Nu-

merous as his escort was, they were soon dispersed, and he was dragged to the fatal lamp-iron, where a new cord was already prepared for him. His despair inspired him with new courage; and snatching a bayonet out of the hands of one of the guards, he attempted to defend himself, if not from death, at least from ignominy.—He fell pierced with innumerable wounds.—A monster of inhumanity, a dragoon, plunged his hands into his reeking entrails, and, tearing out his heart, and fixing it on the point of his cutlafs, carried it about as a trophy through the streets. The head was also cut off, and carried about with that of M. Foulon.

It is said the dragoon, who in this brutal manner tore out the heart of M. Berthier, did it in revenge for the death of a father: be that as it may, his comrades were so completely disgusted with the barbarity of the action, that they determined to fight him successively till by his death they had removed the dishonour which it fixed upon their corps. He fought, and was killed the same evening.

To apologize for such actions would be in some degree to partake of their criminality. Wretched is the fate of that nation which is obliged to employ the agency of a mob to counteract the usurpations of tyranny. If, however, we candidly consider the grievances and oppressions under which the people of France had for centuries languished; if we consider the licentiousness inherent in the canaille of a populace city, and how prone human nature is to the abuse of power; if we recollect the individual provocations and injuries which men suffer from persons high in office under an arbitrary government, the atrocity will at least be explained if not extenuated. In justice also to the insurgents of Paris, it must be recorded that while, under the mistaken sentiment of revenging the oppressions of their government, they involved themselves in the guilt of murder, they were still superior to such a crime as theft. The bodies of the marquis de Launay and of the major of the Bastille lay exposed in the Place de Grève

for a number of hours, and neither their watches nor any one of their valuables were even touched by the mob; and when M. Foulon was massacred, his pockets were full of money and bank-notes, which were taken carefully out by some of the multitude, and deposited before the committee on the table of the Hôtel de Ville. On what foundation we cannot pretend to say, but it has been advanced by the popular party, that, with respect to M. M. Foulon and Berthier, the people were made the blind instruments of private enmity, or of their accomplices themselves; who probably saw no other means of concealing the atrociousness of their own conduct from public enquiry. From the windows of the Hôtel de Ville a number of persons of superior appearance were observed exciting the populace to outrage, and who appeared to be main springs of all their motions. These could scarcely be friends to the popular cause, since nothing could involve it in such disgrace as the perpetration of these barbarities.

This day of horror and of blood filled indeed every good citizen with disgust and apprehension; they trembled lest they should have only exchanged one tyranny for another, and condemned in the strongest terms these gusts of inhumanity, these bloody proscriptions, these outrages against public justice. The marquis de la Fayette in particular was so much exasperated by this contempt of all authority, that he determined at once to resign his office of commander in chief: happily, the eloquence of M. Bailly had sufficient influence to prevail with him to resume it.

The example of the capital gave the signal for revolt in all the provinces; and it was no sooner promulgated that a conspiracy had been formed against the liberties of the nation, than all the citizens became soldiers, and all the soldiers citizens.

At Rennes, the capital of Britany, the young men took up arms about the 20th of July, seized the arsenal, and the principal posts, and raised at once the standard of liberty. The count de Langeron, who commanded there, marched out against them, at the head of the re-

giments d'Artois and Lorraine, and the dragoons d'Orleans; but the soldiers were no sooner drawn up in order of battle than they unanimously shouted *Vive la nation!* Eight hundred immediately joined the patriotic standard, and the rest returned to their barracks, after having taken a solemn oath not to stain their hands in the blood of their fellow citizens. In the mean time the principal people being assembled at the Hôtel de Ville, decreed the suspension of all levies and contributions on the part of the king or the feudal lords; deputations were sent to every town in Brittany; the whole province was presently in arms to support the public cause; and all declared themselves ready to march, if necessary, to the relief of the national assembly. The commanding officer, finding all his efforts in vain, retired from the province.

At St. Malo, the younger citizens determined to form two divisions, one of horse, and the other of foot, and to proceed immediately to the national assembly, to participate with them the danger or the glory of saving their country. As they were without artillery, their first step was to take possession of the city fort, and that of the Chateau Neuf, in order to obtain a supply of arms and ammunition. The commandant reinforced each of the fortresses, but in vain; the soldiers declared they would not act, and the citizens by some stratagem got possession of the keys. It is pleasing to add, that they made the happiest use of their success; they resisted the revengeful impulse which would lead them to punish the obstinacy of the king's lieutenant, and respected human life even in an enemy.

The city of Bourdeaux has been always distinguished by its attachment to liberty. On the fatal night of St. Bartholomew, the chief magistrate of this city was among the few who contended for the rights of humanity in opposition to the blind dictates of fanaticism. On the present occasion, the members of the parliament enrolled themselves voluntarily in the city militia, and mounted guard along with the other inhabitants; and the governor of the castle, animated by a similar spirit,

presented the keys to a deputation of citizens. A statue of M. Neckar was elevated on a pedestal hastily erected for the purpose, and was crowned with a garland of laurel.

The duke de Liancourt succeeded the archbishop of Vienna as president of the national assembly. One of the first circumstances which signalized his presidency, was the permission which was granted by the king to the French guards to enrol themselves among the national militia: in the mean time, addresses expressive of the highest degree of patriotism and confidence, poured in upon the assembly from all parts of the kingdom; and there appeared no visible obstruction to the consummation of its patriotic labours.

The task, however, was not quite so easy as at first sight we might be disposed to conclude: besides the enmity of those who subsisted by the corruptions of the former government, the assembly had to contend with other difficulties, and the approach of famine was not the least calamity with which the nation was threatened.

The hasty exile of M. Neckar had frustrated the plans which he had laid for the acquisition of subsistence. An actual scarcity took place; the granaries and magazines were pillaged; and bands of ruffians were dispersed over the country, and increased the scarcity by their desperate ravages. The enemies of the revolution took advantage of this state of things, to disturb and agitate the popular mind by alarming reports. It was even believed that they monopolized the grain themselves, in order to cast an odium on their opposers. Among the riots excited upon these occasions, none were more disgraceful than those at St. Germain and Poissy; to the latter of which a deputation was sent from the national assembly, with the humane bishop of Chartres at their head. They arrived just time enough to save an innocent person of the name of Thomassin, though the fatal cord was already round his neck.

These proceedings, joined with the affair of M. Foulon, determined the assembly on the 23d of July to

publish a proclamation, inviting all good citizens to the maintenance of order and government; and declaring that to try and punish for all crimes of *leze-nation* was the sole prerogative of the assembly, till, by the constitution which it was about to establish, a regular tribunal should be instituted for the punishment of such offences.

On the 25th the assembly was thrown into the utmost consternation by the report of M. Punelle, one of the deputies of Franche-Comté, who related that M. de Mesmay, a counsellor to the parliament of Besançon and lord of Quincey, had invited the people of his neighbourhood, and the officers of the garrison of Vesoul, to celebrate, at his castle of Quincey, the happy union of the three orders of the state. The entertainment was sumptuous, and the best wines were distributed with a liberal hand; but amidst this scene of festivity the company were at once dispersed by a dreadful explosion of gun-powder, and some persons were even killed upon the spot.

It is easy to conceive the horror and indignation which such a representation must inspire. The president of the assembly was instantly directed to wait upon the king, to request that the transaction might be immediately inquired into; and he was further requested to give orders to his minister for foreign affairs, to claim any of the parties who might have taken refuge in foreign countries.

It was some time before the matter could be investigated, nor has it ever been cleared up to general satisfaction. The best account that has been given of it is, that three drunken soldiers having gone to sleep in the pavilion, and having procured a light, a barrel of gun-powder, which was kept there, accidentally exploded, and the soldiers, and they only, fell the victims of their indiscretion.

Unfounded, however, as these reports concerning M. Mesmay appear to have been, their effects were more or less felt by all the nobility of France. The populace of the neighbourhood would have immediate-

ly pulled down the castle of Quincey, but were prevented by the militia and citizens of Besançon. In other places, as soon as the report was received, riots were excited, some castles were ransacked, and two or three gentlemen of irreproachable characters lost their lives.

In this period of general distrust, we cannot wonder that even circumstances, trifling in themselves, should produce new troubles. The baron de Castelnau, resident in France from Geneva, was arrested on the Pont Royal; and the moment he was arrested he tore in pieces a letter; but the fragments were carefully collected, and transmitted, with three other open letters found upon him, by M. Bailly to the duke de Liancourt.—When the packet arrived there were but few members in the hall, and the delicacy of the president would not permit him to keep open letters in his possession. Considering also that the assembly was invested with no executive power, he thought it his duty to send back the packet to M. Bailly, not doubting but it would be produced when called for. A long and not unimportant discussion of this business ensued. On the one side, it was proposed by the count de Chatenai, M. Reubel, and others, “that all intercepted letters should be deposited in a proper place for the inspection of the committee of the assembly; and that the papers found in the Bastille should be collected, in order to form a history of the crimes of the old government, which would serve as a kind of preface to the constitution.” On the other hand, it was urged by M. Camus, “That all the instructions of their constituents had consecrated the inviolability of private correspondence; that the national assembly ought not to set the example of a breach of public faith; and that the only exception ought to regard the correspondence of those persons who are actually in the hands of justice.”—The bishop of Langres observed, “that all ages had applauded the generosity of Pompey, who committed to the flames the letters which the senators had addressed to Sertorius.” M. Duport remarked, “that the advantage was dubi-

ous, and the danger manifest; that the most virtuous citizen, and the greatest of men, M. Turgot, had been ruined by a fictitious correspondence." The assembly, much to its honour, decreed, that in such a case there was no room for debate. Thus the sanctity of private correspondence was held inviolate; and in the midst of treasons and conspiracies, while the national assembly was engaged in the great work of establishing liberty, it declared itself above employing or imitating any of the disgraceful resources of tyranny.

Among the alarms and reports to which the unsettled state of France at this time gave rise, a very formidable rumour was circulated, That the court of London was disposed to take advantage of the troubles of the nation; that the English fleets in both Indies had already commenced the attack; and that St. Domingo and Pondicherry were already among the number of their conquests. So injurious a calumny could not be overlooked by the ambassador of Great-Britain. He wrote immediately to the minister, the count de Montmorin, disclaiming on the part of his court every hostile intention, and, in corroboration of his assertion, appealing to his recollection, that in the beginning of June a plot had been concerted for seizing the port of Brest, by certain persons who claimed the countenance and protection of Great Britain; but that the proposal had been rejected with indignation by the English cabinet, and that he (the Duke of Dorset) had immediately apprised the French ministry of the danger.

The letter of the ambassador being read in the assembly, and communicated to the people of Paris, sufficiently quieted every apprehension concerning the interference of Great-Britain; and to prevent in future the interruption of the national business, a committee of twelve members was immediately appointed to take cognizance of every report or information which respected the public safety.

The consequences of the duke of Dorset's letter were more serious in the province of Brittany. The plot which he had mentioned against Brest was immediate-

ly laid to the charge of the nobility ; and the enemies of some of that body who had shewn themselves averse to the revolution, industriously represented them to the people as the criminals. Several were arrested, and confined in the castles of Nantes and St. Malo. The nobility of the province appealed to the justice of the national assembly, and entreated that the duke of Dorset might be requested to give more precise documents, that the criminality might no longer be extended to all the ancient families of a respectable quarter of the kingdom, but might attach to those only who were really concerned. The assembly referred the investigation to the executive power ; but declared at the same time their opinion, that the evidence appeared so vague and indirect, that the gentlemen ought to be liberated.

A letter from M. Neckar, in answer to the requisition of the assembly, was received on the 27th of July. It was dated Basil, and was expressive of his gratitude and devotion to their commands. Posterity will regard it as an incident more resembling the visions of romance than the occurrences of real life, that the first intimation he received of the revolution was from the mouth of the dutchess de Polignac, his bitterest enemy. M. Neckar had quitted Brussels in the determination of retiring from public life, and forgetting his disgrace and his unsuccessful labours in the peaceful retirement of his estate in the vicinity of Geneva. In his way thither, he arrived at Basil accidentally at the very moment when madame Polignac, in her precipitate flight, stopped at that city. We may easily conceive his surprise when an interview was requested by that lady ; but it must have been still greater, when she acquainted him with the amazing revolution of which his exile had been the proximate occasion. Notwithstanding the remonstrances of his friends, he determined, without hesitation, to resume his office.—“I would rather,” said he, “expose myself to danger than to remorse.” He waited at Basil till he received the orders of the

king, and then followed immediately the courier who announced his approach.

As he passed through Villenaux, on the road from Nogent to Versailles, he was informed that the baron de Bezenval, commandant of the Swiss guards, who had acted under marshal Broglio, was arrested by the militia of that place, and that his life was in danger. The humanity of M. Neckar was immediately interested, and he wrote in his carriage the following short note to the municipal officers of Villenaux.

"I know to a certainty, gentlemen, that the Baron de Bezenval, who has been arrested by the militia of Villenaux, had the king's permission to return to Switzerland, his own country. I entreat, gentlemen, that you will respect this permission, of which I am your guarantee, and I shall consider myself as under a particular obligation. Every motive that can affect a feeling mind impels me to make this request, &c."

Pressing as was this requisition, it was not complied with, as the municipal officers determined, that before the baron should be released, it was proper to consult the permanent committee at the Hôtel de Ville.

The passage of M. Neckar through France, was more gratifying to the human feelings than the most distinguished triumph of the most celebrated conqueror. He was followed by the acclamations, not of servile multitudes, but of a free people; who saluted him not as their governor, but as their deliverer, their father, their tutelary genius. In Paris the news of his arrival was celebrated like that of a splendid victory; and the exultation visible in every countenance evinced, that every Frenchman considered the republic as in safety when committed to his care. On the 29th of July, the day after his return, he repaired to the national assembly, to render his respects to that august body. He was introduced by four gentlemen ushers, and every mark of attention and respect was paid to this martyr in the public cause;---this minister, who taught the sovereign to respect the rights of the people, and who instructed the multitude in their duty to the throne. The presi-

dent complimented him on his arrival in a very elegant address, which, in honour both of the speaker and the minister, was directed to be printed.

Even these testimonies of esteem, however, appear little when compared with the splendour of his reception in Paris: that city, which so much exceeded the rest of the kingdom in wealth, population, and magnificence, exceeded every other part in its zeal for liberty, and its joy on the restoration of its favorite minister. On the morning of the 30th, the day he had appointed for visiting the metropolis, numerous detachments of infantry and cavalry were stationed on the road to Versailles to meet him. He arrived in a coach and four, with M. St. Priest, his colleague, who had participated in his principles, and in his disgrace. At half past twelve they reached the Hôtel de Ville, amidst the acclamations of thousands.—M. Bailly and the marquis de la Fayette, with the representatives of the commune, received him in the great hall; where he was complimented by M. Bailly in a strain of eloquence in which dignity was happily blended with simplicity. The speech of M. Neckar, in reply, was distinguished by that pathetic sweetness of expression which marks all his compositions. He expressed his gratitude in modest terms, and informed them that the king had received him in the kindest manner, and assured him of his entire confidence. He observed, however, that the whole welfare of the state was now placed in their hands, and in those of the national assembly: from this circumstance he took occasion most earnestly to recommend the re-establishment of order and government. He entreated them, in the name of Heaven, that the world should hear no more of proscriptions; no more of such bloody scenes as had so lately been acted. From this topic he passed to the baron de Bezenval, to whose merits, in his station, he bore honourable testimony; and entreated, in the most persuasive terms, that he might be set at liberty. He even went further, and insisted on a general amnesty, as the only measure consistent with their honour, and with the restoration of liberty. The enthusiasm of humanity

communicated itself from the orator to all his auditors, and an amnesty was unanimously decreed by the general assembly of the electors of Paris.

That the assembly of electors in this instance transgressed the powers vested in them cannot be doubted; and unfortunately too many were interested both in the repeal of the amnesty, and in lowering the consequence of the elective body, to permit such an act to pass without animadversion. It was scarcely made known before the sixty districts of Paris were in the most violent agitation. They exclaimed, that the electors, delegated for the sole purpose of choosing deputies to the states-general, had assumed new powers, and could only have in view the perpetuating of their own authority. They had indeed, during the moments of popular confusion, submitted to the orders of this body, because some active and directing principle was then wanting; but the present step they considered as trenching on the authority of the national assembly, without precedent, without excuse. The enemies of the minister eagerly grasped the opportunity to lessen him in the public esteem. They insinuated, that he would sacrifice the public welfare to his own ambition; and that he wished to save the baron de Bezenval, only from a conviction that it would render him particularly agreeable to the court: that the whole of the conspirators would speedily return in triumph, insolently to brave the resentment of the nation, and to vent their cruelty on the defenders of liberty. These injurious insinuations were unhappily too favourably received; the alarm-bells were sounded, the Place de Grève re-echoed with frightful menaces, even at the precise time when at the palais Royal the return of M. Neckar was celebrated with concerts and illuminations. The electors, alarmed, immediately issued a proclamation explanatory of their former resolution, which, they asserted, implied no assumption of judicial authority to condemn or acquit the enemies of the nation; but was to be understood simply as a declaration that the citizens from that day would punish no man but according to law. They dispatched messengers at the same time to

prevent the liberation of Bezenval; and closed all by a formal renunciation of the powers which, they said, only the necessities of the times had compelled them to assume.

These facts were no sooner communicated to the national assembly, than they produced an interesting and important debate among the friends of liberty. Some, in particular Mess. Lally Tolendal, Mounier, Clermont Tonnerre, and Garat the younger, supported the sacred principle of civil liberty, that no person ought to be arrested without a positive accusation. "Let us not be told," said they, "of the popular clamours: if a mere suspicion be called a popular clamour, what citizen can be assured for a moment of that liberty which we are seated here to protect*?"

Mess. Gleizen, Robespierre, Mirabeau, and Barnave, replied:—That the present question was not relative to the general principles of civil liberty:—that the people had a right to arrest a man who had publicly appeared at the head of their enemies, and who fled the kingdom at the instant when the assembly announced its intention of prosecuting the enemies of the nation. M. Bezenval, they urged, is accused by the voice of the public:—if he is innocent, let him be acquitted; if he is guilty, let him be punished. The object at present is to preserve him from the fury of the multitude, to declare him under the safeguard of the law. A legal prosecution only can prevent popular outrage.

The debate concluded in a resolution, "approving of the explanation which the electors had given of their decree: adding, that if a generous nation prohibited proscription, it was still the duty of the representatives to take care that justice should be duly executed;—and that, as to the person of the baron de Bezenval, it was to remain in secure custody near the place where he was arrested, he being from that time under the safeguard of the law."

* It would have been happy for France if these sentiments had prevailed.

M. de Bezenval had been in the mean time conducted to Brie-Comte-Robert, where he was committed to the castle, which was put in a posture of defence. It was fortunate for him, that the courier dispatched by the assembly to prevent his being brought to Paris used extraordinary diligence. Thirty thousand desperadoes waited for him at the Grève, where a gallows and a rope were made ready; and every thing announced the renewal of the horrid scenes which had so lately been acted.

Had he indeed entered the city, no human power could have saved him.

The affair of M. de Bezenval was not the only circumstance which at this tumultuous period outraged the sensibility, and interrupted the proceedings of the national assembly. At St. Denis, near Paris, a most horrid murder was committed. The sieur Chatel, lieutenant to the mayor, was charged with the distribution of corn there; and the bread which the bakers offered for sale not proving agreeable to the mob, a riot was excited.—The personal enemies of M. Chatel, and others suspected of being disaffected to the new order of things, assiduously mingled in the mob. After a vigorous defence, this unfortunate gentleman escaped to the belfry of the collegiate church; but was discovered by a child, and pursued immediately by the multitude. There the savages fastening the bell-ropes round his neck, and drawing them different ways, inhumanly strangled him; and what adds to the atrociousness of the crime is, that he was a gentleman of known worth, and of great humanity; a friend of liberty, and the patron of the poor.

It is some time before a people can learn to be free. At Caen in Normandy, disturbances similar to those in Paris took place in a few days after the revolution. The circumstance which gave rise to these fatal broils, is said to be as follows: Some soldiers of the regiment of Artois came either by accident or on business to Caen, and were decorated with medals, as the honourable marks of their devotion to the cause of liberty and their country. These patriotic soldiers, who were un-

armed, were insulted by some dragoons of the regiment of Bourbon, who, after an unequal, though bloody combat, robbed them of their medals. The wounded men complained to the citizens; and the marquis de Belzune, who was major of the dragoons, was accused of having excited his soldiers to this atrocious conduct. The people immediately had recourse to their arms; the municipal officers, as well as those of the regiment, exerted themselves to prevent the effusion of blood. M. de Belzune protested his innocence, and offered to appear at the Hôtel de Ville, where he would render them the most convincing proofs. The regiment, however, would not permit him to proceed, unless they had hostages for his safe return; which were immediately given. The unfortunate major bravely delivered himself into the hands of the multitude; and the national guard surrounded him, with a view of conducting him to the citadel, where he might be in safety. In the mean time the marquis de Harcourt, commander in chief of the province, ordered the regiment out of the town; and tranquillity appeared so completely re-established, that the hostages were set at liberty. The regiment was however scarcely out of the boundaries, than the insurrection rekindled; the mob broke in upon the national guard, and murdered the unfortunate marquis de Belzune, with every circumstance of barbarity.

The city of Strasbourg was also the theatre of some bloody scenes. This city, when it became united to France, had preserved its ancient form of government, which was originally democratic, but had degenerated insensibly (as all institutions purely democratic generally will) into an aristocracy. The people, therefore, disgusted with the usurpations of the magistracy, had for a considerable period only waited an opportunity to revolt; and the news of the taking of the Bastille excited a universal ferment. A general illumination took place on the night of the 20th of July; and those houses which did not follow the example, had the windows presently demolished by the populace.—The city

continued in a state of uproar till the 22d; during which time the magistrates had pacified the more respectable citizens; and all would have been quiet, had not a band of ruffians, from the German side of the Rhine, insinuated themselves into the city during the troubles. At about four o'clock in the afternoon of the 22d, the Hôtel de Ville was invaded by this banditti, and the succeeding night and morning the city was on fire in several places: the citizens, however, joining with the soldiery, orders were at length given to charge the mob, many of whom were killed by the soldiers, and a few were afterwards executed; the greater part of whom were foreigners from the other side of the river. The city, however, continued a kind of military discipline till the 6th of August, when another riot ensued from the intemperance of the soldiers; but was quieted by the timely interference of the count de Rochambeau, commander in chief of the province.

Hitherto, in the midst of these disastrous events, the assembly itself preserved a degree of unanimity, from the time when the orders became united, which gave a force and dignity to all its proceedings. The latent seeds of discord, however, germinated within its constitution; and the first appearance of disorder was at the time when a successor was to be chosen to the duke de Liancourt. M. Thouret, a celebrated advocate of Rouen, a distinguished patriot, and a most excellent citizen, was elected by a considerable majority to the president's chair. The scrutiny was no sooner declared, than a considerable party expressed the strongest dissatisfaction, and, it is said, even proceeded to threats. M. Thouret, however, had the magnanimity and patriotism to decline the high honour that awaited him, and M. Chapellier, one of the deputies of Britany, was elected in his stead.

The assembly had been assiduously employed for some time on the great question of a declaration of the natural rights of men and citizens; and the debates upon this subject were full of ingenious disquisition, and profound moral and political speculation.—On the 4th of

August, however, this body saw the object of its deliberations take a very different course; and instead of metaphysical discussion, and abstract reasoning, it was at once turned to decisive measures, and those the boldest and most interesting, perhaps, that ever distinguished the proceedings of a legislative assembly.

The committee of reports, after having exhibited an affecting picture of the public and private calamities with which the kingdom was convulsed, proposed, as a means of remedying these evils, "that the assembly should publish as soon as possible a solemn declaration, intimating its anxiety and concern for the troubles which agitated the provinces, its entire disapprobation of the non-payment of taxes, rents, and other feudal incumbrances; and declaring, that till the assembly had passed a decree upon these subjects, there existed no motive to justify such non-payment."

Considerable debates succeeded upon this proposition, and a variety of projects were proposed for extricating the nation from the difficulties and troubles in which it was involved.—At length the viscount de Noailles arose to point out, he said, the only effectual means of restoring peace. "We are called upon, said he, to quiet the troubles, and quell the insurrections, which exist in the country: to do this, we must inquire into the cause of these troubles, and this will lead us to the proper remedy. The communities have made a demand upon us; they have demanded that they should be released from the chains of vassalage, and that the feignorial oppressions should be abolished or changed. For three months the communities have beheld us engaged in verbal disputes, while their own attention and their wishes are directed to things: they are acquainted only with two classes of people, those who now bear arms to assert their liberties, and those higher orders whose interest it is to oppose them.—What is the consequence? They are armed to reclaim their rights, and they see no prospect of obtaining their object but by force. Thus the whole kingdom is convulsed; and thus there are no means of restoring tranquillity, but by convinc-

ing the people that we are in earnest in their cause, and that we resist them only where it is manifestly for their interest that they should be resisted.

"I propose, therefore, 1. That the committee be instructed to propose a declaration, that every TAX shall henceforward be levied in proportion to the income of each individual. 2. That the burdens of the state be equally borne by every member of the state. 3. That all feudal claims, which are not of a personal nature, shall be redeemable on a fair valuation. 4. That all the claims of the lord, which are of a personal nature, such as personal service, &c. shall cease without any ransom."

This motion was highly applauded, and was seconded by the duke d'Aiguillon in a very able speech. M. le Grand established a most accurate distinction between the different species of feudal rights. "They are," said he, "real, personal, or mixed. The first, such as *mainmorte* or vassalage, the *corvées* or right to the labour of the peasant, &c. are vicious in their origin, contrary to the imprescriptible rights of man, and consequently so unjust, that to order them to be ransomed would be an act deserving of the severest censure. With respect to real rights, such as quit-rents, rents, rents in kind, &c. they must not only be made redeemable, but the whole of such claims on any individual must be consolidated, and the valuation made accordingly. Mixed rights, such as the *bannalites* (or compulsion to bake in the landlord's oven, upon paying a toll out of the flour), as they partake of the nature of both the others, ought to be redeemed, but at a more moderate ransom than those claims which are actually real."

M. Guen de Kerengall enumerated several absurd species of feudal claims, many of which cannot even be named without offence to modest ears. By the feudal laws of some cantons, the vassals were subject to be yoked to the carriage of the lord, like beasts of burden; in some the tenants were obliged to pass whole nights in beating the ponds, that his rest might not be distur-

bed by the croaking of frogs ; in others they were compelled to maintain his hounds : but the most dreadful instance of feudal barbarism, was a law (obsolete indeed for ages) which authorized the lord, in certain districts, on his return from hunting, to rip open the bellies of two of his vassals, that he might foment his feet in their warm bowels by way of refreshment.

In fine, the motions of M. de Noailles were approved unanimously ; and the disinterested patriotism of the assembly being wound up to the highest pitch, they were followed by other sacrifices truly honourable to the members of the privileged orders. The first of these was *the total abolition of the inferior courts of justice established upon feudal principles* throughout the kingdom, and which were in every respect corrupt and oppressive.

M. Foucault proposed the *immediate suppression of all places and emoluments* granted by the court, except those which were the due rewards of merit and actual services ; and this motion also was received with applause.

The president was now proceeding to put these motions to the vote ; but he stopped himself by remarking—" That as the clergy had not yet had an opportunity of declaring their sentiments, he should esteem himself guilty of indecorum, if he did not particularly request their opinions upon this interesting discussion."—This invitation brought up the bishop of Nancy, who requested in the name of the clergy, that if the *ransom of the feudal rights should be decreed, it might not be converted to the profit of the ecclesiastical lords, but might be appropriated to the augmentation of poor livings.*

The bishop of Chartres, after approving the sacrifices already made, recommended the *suppression of the game laws.*—He represented in strong terms the absurdity of those impositions which condemned the husbandman to be the patient spectator of the ravage of his fields, and exposed him to severe punishment if he presumed to destroy those animals which were most

detrimental to his labours.—A number of voices from the nobility concurred in these sentiments, and demanded a renunciation of what were termed the rights of the chase, reserving only to the proprietors of the land the right of sporting within their own demesnes.

The acclamations of the assembly were interrupted by the president de S. Fargeau, who demanded an explanation of the declarations of the nobility and clergy concerning the *equalization of taxes*. “We have given a hope to the people,” said he; let us give them a reality. Why should we delay a moment to perform what all the instructions from the different orders have constituted as almost the first of our labours? I propose, that not only for the last six months of the year, but from the very commencement of it, all the members of the privileged classes, without exception, support their proportional part of the public imposts; and until this assembly shall have established the principles upon which taxes shall in future be paid, I am of opinion the adjustment of the proportion should be left to the discretion of the provincial assemblies, the assemblies of the departments, &c.”

These renunciations were followed by those of the exclusive *right of rabbit warrens*, and of *fisheries*. M. de Riché proposed to abolish the *sale of offices*; and the count de Visieux recommended the demolition of *dove-cotes*, which trifling as the evil may appear to us, were from their numbers a serious grievance to the peasantry of France. The curé of Souppes offered, in the name of his brethren, the relinquishment of casualties, and all fees exacted from the poor. This generous declaration was followed by that of several dignitaries of the church, who stated, that, agreeably to the spirit of the canons, they were determined to limit themselves to the possession of a *single benefice*. M. Duport embraced this opportunity to compliment the inferior clergy, and to propose an *augmentation of their stipends*.

After confirming these proposals by a vote of the assembly, the business of reform appeared almost ex-

hausted, when the deputies of those provinces which enjoyed peculiar privileges, came forward to lay their charters and their franchises at the feet of the national representatives. Dauphinè, which was always forward to sacrifice its advantages to the welfare of the nation, was the first to testify its acquiescence on the present occasion. The marquis de Blazons called the attention of the assembly to the resolution which his province had passed at Vizille, to renounce its peculiar privileges. He expressed his wish that all the other provinces would imitate this example, and declare themselves satisfied with the name and privileges of French citizens. He had scarcely spoken when the deputies of Britany, which had always been the rival of Dauphinè in patriotism, pressed round the table to make a similar sacrifice. The impatience of the representatives of Provence and Forcalquier scarcely suffered them to wait till those of Britany had made their patriotic declaration; and they were followed by the deputation of Burgundy, Languedoc, and by the representatives of Paris, Lyons, Marseilles, Bourdeaux, Strasbourg, &c.

A number of motions of less importance succeeded; and the suppression of deport, vacat, annates, and pluralities was immediately decreed. The duke de Liancourt proposed that a medal should be struck off in commemoration of this unparalled session, and that a solemn Te Deum should be performed. On the reigning monarch the august title of RESTORER OF GAL-LIC LIBERTY was conferred by a decree, and a deputation appointed to wait upon his majesty, respectfully to inform him of these transactions.

It is evident that these sacrifices, disinterested as they were, could not be generally acceptable. The great body of the nobility and clergy were disposed to deny the power of their representatives, who, they asserted, had voted away what was not their own. That they should not have had more weight with the people, is more surprising; but the spirit of anarchy and licentiousness was excited, and could not easily subside. In some places, the decrees of the assembly seemed to be made

the excuse for new disorders—The game in particular was made a common prey; and, in the pursuit, even the extreme necessities of the kingdom were disregarded, as the standing corn was trodden down and destroyed. But the great cause of confusion was the increasing scarcity of bread, which seemed to render the populace desperate, and totally regardless of order. Some convoys of bread and provisions were stopped on the road to Paris; and two electors of that city, who were employed at Provence in purchasing supplies for the metropolis, were arrested on the suspicion of being monopolists, and narrowly escaped with their lives.

On the 7th of August the new ministers, the keeper of the seals, the marshal Bauvau, the count de Montmorin, the count de la Luzerne, M. Neckar, the count de St. Priest, the archbishop of Vienne, and the count de la Tour du Pin, were introduced at their request to the assembly; and the archbishop of Bourdeaux, the keeper of the seals, drew a most lamentable picture of the disorders which prevailed throughout the kingdom. He was followed by M. Neckar, who represented, in strong terms, the miserable state of the public treasury, which on his entrance into office was found to contain only four hundred thousand livres, chiefly in notes of the *caisse d'escompte*. He added, that the deficit between the income and the expences was enormous; and that such had been the sums which the king had been obliged to issue for the purchase of grain, and for the support of the poor, and such the deficiency created by the non-payment of taxes, that no resource remained but to raise a loan of thirty millions to satisfy the engagements and inevitable expences of the state for two months, by which time he presumed that considerable progress would be made in the establishing of a constitution. This loan he proposed at five per cent. But the proposal was remitted to the consideration of the committee of finance; which presuming too far upon the patriotism of the people, retrenched the terms of the loan of all those little advantages which the mi-

nister had annexed to it, in order to induce the moneyed people to subscribe, and reduced the interest to four and a half*. In the debates which took place upon the proposals of the minister, there appears reason to suspect that the count de Mirabeau was instigated by a personal opposition to M. Neckar; and it was certainly owing to his influence in the assembly that the plan of the minister was not adopted. The consequence was, that in three weeks not more than two million six hundred thousand livres were subscribed to the loan, and the project utterly failed. In order therefore to procure a supply of forty millions, another scheme was offered by M. Neckar, and adopted by the assembly, which was, to solicit a loan of eighty millions at five per cent. one half of which might be paid in stock; but the assembly had lost the favourable opportunity, and, by the impediments which they threw in the way of M. Neckar's first project, had unsettled the faith of the moneyed interest in the new government.

In the mean time the tumultuous state of the nation obliged the legislature to pass a decree, recommending to the municipalities to be vigilant for the public safety, and rigorously to prosecute all who should be found exciting public alarms or disturbances. The decrees of the 4th of August also had been sent to a committee, which was appointed for the purpose of reducing them into the form of a law; and from the 5th to the 11th the different articles were debated. Most of those which respected the feudal claims were confirmed with little variation; but the committee considering tithes as a species of feudal tax levied on the land, had inserted them in the decree as redeemable like the other feudal assessments. To this construction the clergy strongly objected, and alledged that it confounded two things essentially different, the feudal tithes and those which

* This was one of the first errors of the assembly---It will be curious to attend to the gradations by which France has been ruined: they all originated in that fatal distrust of the executive power, which first led them to counteract, next to disgrace ministers, and at last to dethrone the monarch himself.

were purely ecclesiastical, which last constituted a species of private property, not at the disposal of the nation. The necessities of the state, on the other hand, had for some time induced the popular party to look upon the wealth of the church as the last resource for the replenishment of an exhausted treasury; and with this view the proposal of the committee was strenuously supported by Messrs. Chaffel, Mirabeau, &c. The abbé Sieyes was the ablest defender of the rights of the clergy. With great logical precision and accurate information, he evinced that the tithes were not a tax imposed by the nation, but a rent-charge laid upon their estates by the original proprietors for the maintenance of the church; that the actual proprietors had purchased their estates subject to this rent-charge; and that the legislature had no authority to transfer this, which was a real property, from the hands of the clergy to the landholders, who had no legitimate nor apparent claim to it.—“If you wish to be free,” added he, “begin by being just.” The necessities of the nation, however, constituted a plea on the other side, which was not to be resisted*; and on the morning after this debate, fifteen curés sent to the assembly an act, by which they voluntarily resigned into the hands of the nation the whole of their ecclesiastical rights, and declared that they were content to rely on the justice of that body for an equitable provision. This act of patriotism was received with the loudest burst of applause; and, as if by a sudden emotion, all the parochial clergy in the assembly stepped forward to the table to make the same sacrifice. The archbishop of Paris next declared, “that, in the name of his brethren, he begged leave to place the whole of their tithes under the discretion of the representatives of the nation—claiming only for themselves enough to support the decency and dignity of public worship, and to enable them to administer to the

* This was the second great error of the assembly. To alienate the affections of so important a body as the clergy, in this early stage of the Revolution, was no less impolitic than the cause was unjust.

relief of the poor."—"Such is the wish of all the clergy," exclaimed the cardinal de la Rochefoucault; "we place our confidence in the nation."

The decree which abolished the feudal system, and the exclusive privileges of hunting, fishing, &c. and which laid all offices and dignities open to every citizen without distinction of birth; which declared that the tithes should be commuted for by a certain stipend; which prohibited the sale of offices, the payment of fees to the clergy on casualties, and all payments to the see of Rome; which annihilated the feudal jurisdictions, pluralities, pensions, and the particular privileges of those provinces which were called *pays d'états*, was finally passed on the 13th of August, and accepted by the king.

Tacitus has somewhere lamented, that the scenes which his duty compelled him to record, wanted that interest and variety which decorated the more flourishing periods of the republic, and complains that his *Annals* contain little more than details of bloodshed and assassinations. In this respect the historian of anarchy will find himself in a similar predicament with the analyst of despotism; and the necessity of recurring so frequently to the odious topic of popular commotion and phrenzy, may perhaps be supposed to stand in need of an apology. The truth is, the kingdom of France, at the period we are describing, was destitute of regular government. The executive power, which is supported only by public opinion, was seized with a kind of political paralysis; it was neither capable of restraining the public impetuosity, nor of directing its motions. The whole kingdom was in agitation, and the slightest rumour was sufficient to produce a paroxysm of popular delusion and madness. The metropolis was however agitated beyond every other part; it was the centre of political discussion, and the theatre where those who were disaffected to the new order of things could put in action their artifices with most safety and with most effect. The calamities which the people had so lately escaped, and the malevolence and

well-known perfidy of their enemies, had generated in them habits of suspicion; and the acts of bloodshed into which they had been betrayed, had familiarized them with cruelty.

In this state of things, we are not to wonder if we see the populace on the point of sacrificing one of their best friends, and in the course of a few weeks demanding clamorously the life of him whom they had chosen for their general. Thus, while the assembly were engaged in performing the most important services to the people, the inhabitants of Paris were endeavouring to dip their hands in the blood of a man (the marquis de la Salle), who, though one of the first of the nobles, had deserted the cause of his order from an affection for the people. On the 5th of August, about nine in the evening, a boat was discovered on the river, rowed by three men, and was stopped by the inhabitants of Port St. Paul: it was found loaded with ammunition from the arsenal; and this discovery was no sooner made, than a general alarm was excited. The boatmen were examined, and M. de la Voisfiere and some other persons who had the custody of the powder, &c. were sent for, who produced an order signed "De la Salle, acting for the M. de la Fayette."—It was in vain that it was represented to the mob, that this powder was *poudre de traite*, that is, of an inferior quality, such as is sent to Guinea, which was transporting from the arsenal only to be changed for better. The mob immediately exclaimed, it is *poudre de traître!* and clamoured for vengeance. M. de la Salle had been dining in the country, and in the evening had returned to the Hôtel de Ville, where he was no sooner arrived than he found upwards of forty thousand people demanding his life. Learning by accident the cause of the tumult, he had, however, the good fortune to retreat without being discovered.

During this time a miscreant had mounted the lamp-post, with a new rope in his hand, where he is said to have remained for not less than three quarters of an hour, while a crew of banditti broke into the Hôtel de

Ville, and ascended even into the clock, in quest of the marquis de la Salle. The coolness and serenity of the marquis de la Fayette appeared to increase with the tumult and the danger. In the mean time he had given secret orders, and had arranged every thing for the public safety by the agency of a faithful serjeant. At length, when he was satisfied that every thing was right, he suddenly arose, and addressing himself to the committee who had sat with him the whole evening, he said—"You are fatigued, gentlemen, and I am fatigued also—let us retire; the Grève is completely free; and I give you my word, that Paris was never in a more perfect state of tranquillity." On looking out of the windows, nothing was to be seen of the mob who had so lately filled the square; it was entirely occupied by soldiers of the national guard, drawn up in most excellent order, who had been gradually introduced by the marquis, and by this means without tumult or trouble expelled their opponents.

The restoration of tranquillity and order was an object of the first importance with the friends of liberty, and it was evident, that to place the municipal governments under proper regulation was the only method of effecting this desired end. As Paris also was not only the first in importance, but the most exposed to the disasters of anarchy, to put a stop to the disorders of the capital was a matter of the most urgent necessity; this could only be done by giving the citizens an interest in the support of good government; and by conferring on those who had property to defend, functions and authority adequate to this purpose; by establishing a regular chain of subordination, and enabling each person to comprehend his proper duties as a public man. A temporary plan of municipal regulation was therefore devised by M. Bailly for the metropolis, which was to exist only till the assembly had perfected that more enlarged scheme by which the whole of the kingdom was to be regulated. As this plan was only temporary, it is unnecessary to enter into any detail concerning it. It is sufficient to say, that the number of the representa-

tives of the districts were augmented to three hundred; that a committee of subsistence was established, which delivered the city from the horrors of famine; and that a lieutenant of the mayor was appointed in every district, who contributed greatly to preserve the harmony of government, and to facilitate the execution of every measure for the preservation of the public tranquillity.

Another operation no less important was the organization of the national guard in Paris. The plan of M. de la Fayette for this purpose was simple but excellent. The Parisian infantry was limited to thirty one thousand men, of whom one thousand were officers; six thousand were paid as soldiers, and the other twenty-four thousand consisted entirely of the citizens without pay. The city of Paris was apportioned into six military divisions; a commandant was created for each; and to each district a battalion was appointed, composed of five companies of one hundred men each: in those battalions, one company consisted of regular soldiers, or the old French guards, and was termed the centre company. The districts elected their military officers. The choice of each of the six commandants was referred to an electoral assembly of the division, composed of representatives of the districts. The right of electing a commander in chief was vested in the districts at large, who appointed a major and lieutenant-general. To these important posts the marquis de la Fayette promoted M. Gouvion, who had been his colleague and companion when he fought for American liberty; and M. Jarré, who had been distinguished in Holland by his attachment to the patriotic party.

After having satisfied the immediate demands of the nation, by the abolition of the feudal absurdities, the national assembly returned to its great work, a declaration of the rights of man. Among the many schemes or systems which were presented to the assembly on this occasion, three principally arrested their attention; those of M. de la Fayette, of the abbé Sieyes, and of M. Mounier. The first of these, in its clearness and

simplicity, greatly resembled the celebrated American declaration: that of the abbé Sieyès embraced the whole fabric of man, and pointed out his rights and his duties in the various departments of social life; it was, however, too complex and profound to be adopted as a kind of popular catechism: that of M. Mounier was not quite so plain and simple as that of the marquis de la Fayette, and was yet less complex than the other. It was, however, neither sufficiently clear and decisive in its principles, nor precise in its phraseology; and the assembly, after long debates, referred the matter to a committee of five members. M. Mirabeau proposed, that the declaration of rights might serve as a kind of preface or introduction to the system of the constitution. After long debates upon the subject, however, it was agreed, that the declaration of rights should be immediately published; and on the 20th of August that form was adopted, which afterwards appeared at the head of the new constitution.

It would be at once useless and uninteresting to enter into a minute detail of the circumstances under which the several articles of the French constitution were voted, or of the debates which they occasioned. The day after the declaration of rights was decreed, six articles chiefly relating to the nature of the monarchy, collected literally from the instructions, were read in the assembly, and were upon the point of being collectively passed; but M. Pethion, whose antimonarchial prejudices have been so injurious to his country, entered upon a long declamation on the subject, and insisted on the rashness of passing a number of articles without a specific examination. After a debate of some length, it appeared that the great object of discussion would be the share which should be allowed to the monarch in the legislative authority. It was therefore determined previously to investigate this single point, whether a law could be enacted by the mere authority of the legislative body, without the sanction of the king, or what we term in England the *royal assent*? The latin word *veto*, which had been in use in Poland on similar occasions, was adopted in the

debates to express the negative of the king; and on the subject of this negative three opinions were prevalent in the national assembly.

Mess. Mounier, Lally Tolendal, Treillard, d'Antraigues, de Mirabeau, and de Liancourt, supported the absolute veto of the king. Two powers, they observed, existed in the body politic; the power of willing or decreeing, and that of acting. By the first a society established the rules of its own conduct, and by the second these rules were carried into execution and effect. Both of these powers are equally necessary; and if on the one part it is essential to liberty that the legislative should be secured from the executive power, so it is no less necessary to support this last against the usurpations of the other; this could only be effected by investing the chief magistrate with an authority to examine the acts of the legislative body, and to refuse to endow them with the sacred character of laws.

If the whole collective body of the people were capable of expressing their will in direct terms, it would be absurd to subject laws so enacted to a royal sanction; but in a representative government, where the deputies might be chosen more from circumstances of fortune and situation than from personal virtue and merit, and where it is possible that the majority of them might unite in opposition to the general good, it is necessary to counteract such an aristocracy by the prerogative of a monarch. Hence an alliance between the crown and the people, against every species of aristocracy, is created by their respective interests and their fears. If, for instance, the prince is possessed of no negative, what shall hinder the representatives from passing an act for perpetuating their own authority, like the famous long parliament of England? What shall prevent them from invading all the functions of the executive power, as well as the rights of the people? There are only two cases in which a monarch can be supposed to refuse his assent: 1st, where he conceives the law in question to be opposite to the real interests of the people; or 2dly, where, deceived by his ministers, he is

induced to resist a law which is injurious to their personal interests. In the first case the prerogative will be beneficially exercised; in the second, the law will be only suspended: for it is impossible that a limited monarch should long resist the wishes of the whole nation. In fact, his veto, however absolute, can be no more at any time than an appeal from the legislature to the people at large.

Such were the arguments with which the almost irresistible eloquence of Mirabeau, in particular, defended the absolute veto: they were, however, combated with some energy by the opposite party. It is essentially necessary, said they, to preserve distinct the two departments of government, the legislative and the executive powers; nor is there any thing in the proper and natural functions of a king, which makes it necessary to constitute him as an essential integrant branch of the legislature. It is difficult to draw the line between the right of stopping proceedings, and the right of action. The right of stopping proceedings in the hands of the executive power, would be to make it superior to the majority of the legislature; it would be a *lettre de cachet* against the supreme will of the nation.

A suspensive veto, or an appeal to the will of the nation, it was urged, would be attended with worse consequences than even the absolute negative: it would change the very nature of the government, and convert it into a pure democracy; instead of a representative government. What an appeal would it be, to twenty-six millions of people, of whom nine-tenths are destitute of instruction, and incapable of understanding the complex nature of political questions? But it is pretended that the legislative power may one day encroach upon the executive; as if a power destitute of arms, could contend with a power which has continually arms in its hands; as if an assembly of 1200 men, necessarily divided by their private interests, and invested with a transient authority, were likely to invade successfully the perpetual and hereditary depository of the whole public force. Consult history, and you will find

throughout every page the legislature of free nations employed, not in usurping the executive power, but in restraining it. Doubtless a good king will consult the general wish of the nation ; but a violent and obstinate king will expose, in defending his prerogative, both his crown and his life.

It was in these terms that Mess. Garat junior, de Landine, Sales, Beaumetz, and others, attacked the royal negative. A very small party pleaded for a suspensive veto ; but as both the great parties agreed in rejecting it, every plan of mediation appeared at first improbable. In the course, however, of the discussion, new lights were reflected upon the subject, and inclined both parties at length to this middle path :

It was acknowledged that the great fountain of the executive power could not, without some danger, be deprived of this prerogative ; nor could it be unlimitedly assigned to the monarch, without the apprehension of a danger still superior. The decisions of a legislative body are certainly not infallible, and in some instances may be opposite even to the will of the nation in general : in that case, therefore, there should exist some counterpoise to their action ; and though it might be dangerous and impolitic to make the king a constituent part of the legislature, yet the power of suspending a law is not an act of legislation. An actual appeal to the people at large would be impracticable, if not unconstitutional. When France adopted the representative form of government, it virtually abolished mandatory instructions from the constituents : supposing then the national assembly to be changed at certain periods by new elections, no great inconvenience could arise from investing the monarch with a power of suspending, for a certain number of successive legislatures, any law that might appear to him contrary to the welfare of the state. It was added, would not this suspensive veto, on the other hand, place the representatives and the king in a state of emulation extremely conducive to the general good ? Would not the deputies of the nation become more circumspect, in not presenting for the royal sanction laws which the king might re-

ject with applause? And would not the monarch be cautious of suspending laws, so good in themselves as to secure their enactment in successive legislatures?

The discussion of this important question was not confined to the assembly. The city of Paris most illegally and improperly presumed to dictate on this occasion, and afforded a melancholy omen of that horrid and unconstitutional interference by which the government was afterwards to be outraged: the populace threatened again to relapse into all their former violence; and even a list was shewn in which a number of members belonging to the assembly itself were marked for destruction. Rennes and Dinan also formally protested against the veto in the most violent terms. In the mean time a memoir was sent from M. Neckar to the assembly on this subject, in which, by a number of very sensible arguments, he enforced the adoption of the suspensive veto, limiting its effects to two legislatures: but the majority, consisting of the most violent of both parties, on the plea of prohibiting all ministerial influence, would not permit the memoir to be read. It was, however, made public in a few days, and is supposed to have had considerable weight with the people at least, if not with the assembly. It was therefore at length determined, "that the king should have the power of suspending any decree for two successive legislatures; but that if a third should persist in enacting it, in that case it was to have the force of a law without the royal sanction."

While the assembly remained undetermined on the important question of the royal *veto* (for it was in agitation from the latter end of August to the 14th of September), other subjects of government not less interesting presented themselves for discussion. The first of these regarded the permanence of a national assembly; in plain terms, whether there should always exist an assembly ready to be convoked upon any occasion, like the parliament of England; or whether it should only meet periodically, and be virtually dissolved on the close of the session. On this topic there was little room for dissent, and it was carried in favour of a permanent assembly with

only three dissenting voices. On the next topic of discussion there was less unanimity. M. Lally Tolendal, in the name of the committee of constitution, proposed that the legislature should consist of two chambers, a lower and an upper house. In the original draft which the reporter exhibited as an improvement on the English constitution, the senate or upper house was to be composed of members chosen for life; but M. Mounier thought that this high dignity ought to be conferred only for seven years.

This proposed organization was universally disapproved by the people. It was evidently founded on the supposed balance of powers in the English constitution. But the popular party considered it as an asylum for the old aristocracy, and (to use the phraseology of a writer of this party) as the cradle of a new one: nay, even the partisans of the feudal system opposed the creation of a new dignity, which was to be raised in function and authority above the ancient nobility of the realm.

On the discussion of the subject in the assembly, the English government was treated with all due respect; but M. Rabaut de St. Etienne observed, that the establishment of an upper house there, was not originally with any view of restraining the excesses of popular counsels, but was simply a treaty of accommodation; a capitulation between the arrogance of the great and the spirit of liberty in the people. "It is," said he, "one of the feudal relics, and we have agreed to destroy that pernicious system."

The very nature of things, it was urged, is adverse to every division of the legislative authority. The nation which is represented is *one*, the representative body ought to be *one* also. The *will* of the nation, of which the assembly is the organ, is indivisible, and so ought to be the *voice* which pronounces it.—Again, if the two chambers have not respectively a *veto* upon the acts of each other, there is no object in dividing them: if each of them possesses this *veto*, in some cases they will be reduced to perfect inaction. If the senators are ap-

pointed for life, they will naturally be on the side of the monarch, who may gratify their avarice by places and pensions, and amuse their ambition by splendid expectations and promises: a senate for life then would be no more than an additional force added to the executive power.

The remainder of the debate was interrupted and tumultuous. The bishop of Langres, who was president, and a decided friend to the measure of two chambers, quitted the chair, which was taken by the count de Clermont Tonnerre; and when the suffrages were collected, though more than one thousand voted, only eighty-nine were in favour of an upper house.

In the discussion of the *veto* two other subjects also had been involved; namely, the *duration of the legislative body*, and the mode to be pursued in *re-electing the deputies*. On the first of these topics two evils were to be avoided; an existence too short, which afforded no scope for experience, nor for the display of talents, and which would necessarily render the operations of the legislature versatile and inconstant; and a protracted duration, which might open a way to corruption, and generate the *esprit de corps*. The term of *two years* was adopted*, as the medium between the extreme points of an annual assembly and the dangerous possession of authority for a more extended period. The same reasons induced the assembly to prefer the *election of new members entirely to each legislature*, rather than a partial re-election; since they conceived, that whatever the new members might want in experience they would compensate in diligence and zeal; that it might be a means of extending the political knowledge and ability of the superior classes; and, in fine, as it appeared the only effectual mode of utterly excluding the evils of faction and venality. This, however, in the conclusion, though it did honour to their intentions, proved the most fatal of all the false steps taken by the constituent assembly, and was assuredly the cause

* A term of three years would have been preferable for many reasons.

of the dissolution of that constitution which they had established.

The assembly decreed with an unanimous voice of acclamation, That the *person of the king is inviolable*; that the *throne is indivisible*; that the *crown is hereditary* in the males of the reigning family, according to the order of primogeniture, to the perpetual exclusion of females.

The unanimity on these questions was nearly destroyed, and the proceedings of the assembly interrupted, by the artful introduction of a most imprudent topic. The only hope of the disaffected party now rested on the probability of involving the nation in a dispute or contest with some foreign power; and a fair opportunity was offered when the motion for regulating the succession came under consideration. It was then proposed, that the assembly should decide whether the Spanish branch of the Bourbon family were legally excluded by the renunciation which Philip V. had agreed to by the treaty of Utrecht. No question could be more impertinent or irrelevant in its object than this; and the necessary consequence of a decision must have been, on the one hand to disgust the court of Spain, or on the other to give occasion to the calumniators of the new legislature to assert that they paid no regard to the sacred nature of treaties. From this dilemma they were happily relieved, after three days debate, by an amendment proposed by M. Target, which disavowed the intention of extending the spirit of the last of the above articles to the prejudging of the effect of renunciations by treaty.

The decrees of the 4th of August had, as we have already stated, been sent to the king; and on the 12th of September a decree was passed pressing the necessity of their promulgation. On the 18th a letter was received from his majesty, approving in general terms of the spirit of the decrees, but stating some objections against particular articles, especially the abolition of those rents which had been originally founded in personal service, but which were to the present proprietors

a species of actual property; and also remarking, that some difficulty would attend the abolition of tithes; and that there appeared some danger of offending the German princes who had possessions in Alsace, which were secured to them by treaty. To these articles therefore he proposed to give only a conditional assent, with a promise of modifying or even renouncing his opinions, if convinced by the observations of the national assembly.

Neither the people nor the assembly were satisfied with this letter of the king. It was said that these decrees were sent to the executive power, not for his assent, but for the purpose of promulgation merely; that they were principles rather than laws, and that the sanction of the executive power was not necessary to the consecration of principles; but that the observations of his majesty would come properly under consideration when these articles were to be reduced into the form of laws. On the motion of M. Chappelier, therefore, it was resolved, "That the president should wait on the king to entreat him, that he would immediately order the promulgation of the decrees of the 4th of August and the following days; assuring his majesty that the national assembly would pay the most respectful attention to the observations which he had been pleased to communicate." The king immediately acceded to the wishes of the legislature, and on the 20th of September sanctioned the decrees.

Amidst this general prospect of a happy establishment of rational liberty, the derangement of the finances seemed to oppose an invincible obstacle to the patriotic labours of the friends of the people. The proposed loan of eighty millions had failed; loans in general were decried; and the current specie of the kingdom was transferred to distant countries. Nothing, however, could discourage the confidence which the citizens reposed in their representatives: the pecuniary difficulties which embarrassed the government were no sooner known, than a number of disinterested expedients were projected for relieving them. The wives and

daughters of the opulent inhabitants of Paris appeared at the bar of the assembly, and, after the example of the Roman ladies, offered their jewels and their ornaments of value on the altar of the public. The whole kingdom was at once actuated by a general enthusiasm; infancy sacrificed its toys; old age its comforts; opulence presented the tribute of its wealth; and poverty itself consecrated to its country a part of its subsistence. The king, whose benevolence has never been questioned, however imprudently he may have acted in some difficult circumstances, and under improper influence, voluntarily sent his rich services of plate to the mint, though the assembly entreated him in the strongest terms to revoke the resolution.

The necessities of the state, however, were too considerable to be materially relieved by these patriotic donations; and they were found scarcely sufficient to answer the current expences. M. Neckar was the only person who did not despair. He had the courage to represent to the assembly the calamitous situation of the republic, and the means of alleviating it. He shewed that by certain reductions in the public expence, by different projects of œconomy, by an equalization of the taxes, the most reasonable hopes might be entertained respecting the future restoration of credit, and re-establishment of the finances; and, in order to obviate the present embarrassments, proposed that a *contribution should be demanded from every citizen, equivalent to a quarter of his nett income*, to be collected in the space of fifteen months, agréably to the solemn declaration of the respective contributors. The assembly were terrified at the boldness of the project; but the count de Mirabeau, who possibly repented of the share he had taken in defeating the former project of the minister, now exerted the full force of his irresistible talents in his favour. He proved that the exigencies of the state required an immediate supply; and that it was impossible to substitute a new scheme of finance in the place of that proposed by M. Neckar, or even to examine that which he had submitted to them; since

to go through the very figures which the statement contained would require a period of not less than three entire months. He urged the necessity of confidence in such a conjuncture; a confidence which he observed the former conduct of the minister entirely warranted; and which ought now to be accorded to him, even though his plan might not be the best that human ingenuity could devise, because there was no other before them which they could adopt. The assembly upon these reasons accepted the plan of M. Neckar; and on the 1st of October he presented it in its perfect form, and with it his own contribution, which amounted to 100,000 livres.

Though the scheme however was accepted in general, the execution of it in detail appeared to be attended with some difficulties; the principal of which was, that all the *cahiers* or instructions had prohibited the imposing of any taxes till the constitution should be established. In this case, however, the necessities of the state rendered a strict compliance with the instructions impossible; but as a pledge to the public, that the assembly were not inattentive to the will of their constituents, several of the patriotic members proposed, that the king should be requested to accept that part of the constitution which was already determined, previous to presenting him with the decree concerning this extraordinary impost. M. Mirabeau, happily combining the different views upon this subject, proposed to make the first part of M. Neckar's plan the preamble to the decree, in order that the prospect of relief might be as conspicuous as the demand. His plan was therefore adopted, notwithstanding the clamours of opposition; and the decree, along with the declaration of rights, was in this state presented to the king.

The events which follow, are by the candid of all parties allowed to be still enveloped in an almost impenetrable cloud of mystery. The democratic writers assert, that a plot was concerted of immense extent for the total ruin of the liberties of France; the principal articles of which were—That the king was to be transf-

ported voluntarily, or involuntarily, to Metz; where the royal standard was to be erected; where all the ancient instruments of despotism, the ministers, generals, and parliaments were to be assembled, and to issue manifestoes against the representatives of the nation—That a subscription was actually opened, by those who termed themselves the king's party, for the express purpose of carrying on a civil war—That both the capital and Versailles were once more to be invested with a powerful army—and that the national assembly was to be forcibly dissolved. These assertions undoubtedly receive some countenance from the fragment of a letter from the count d'Estaing to the queen, in which he mentions such rumours having reached his ears, and in which he earnestly dissuades her from becoming a party in so rash a measure. The court party, on the other hand, throw the blame upon their adversaries, and affirm that the whole was a preconceived plan of the popular leaders to force the king and the assembly to reside within the walls of Paris.

All however that is known with certainty respecting the circumstances which conduced to the commotion at Versailles is, that the minds of the two great parties which had already begun to assume the factious epithets of *democratic* and *aristocratic*, were at this period inflamed to a most extravagant pitch of resentment, and disposed to suspect each other of the most atrocious designs; that the declaration of rights and the first articles of the constitution had remained for some days in the hands of the king, who had delayed to give them the expected sanction; that the clamours of the aristocratic party were louder than ever; that every mode was essayed to work upon the compassion and the loyalty of the nation; that the king was represented as dethroned, and reduced to the most abject state of slavery; and that some of the dependants of the court, in the plenitude of their zeal, were heard to boast "that a few days would restore affairs to their ancient situation, and that the king and his ministers would resume their power." It is well known on the other hand,

that the old French guards, who composed, as we have already seen, the centre company in each battalion of the city militia, and who had been accustomed to the honour of guarding the king's person, saw with a most jealous eye that important trust committed to the body guard and the militia of Versailles. It is not improbable too, that the more ardent of the patriotic party might entertain suspicions, that the sovereign might one day effect an escape from the unguarded palace of Versailles to put himself into the hands of their enemies, and might secretly wish to see him lodged in the centre of a city devoted to their interests, and from which there was but little probability of retreat.

An incident which occurred at Versailles (which stamps the conduct of the court with at least the stigma of imprudence, and which evinced that they were not without hopes that, as the revolution was in a great measure effected by the change which was produced in the minds of the soldiery, a similar change might operate in their favour) contributed to blow the glowing embers into an open flame. The count d'Estaing, who commanded the national guard of Versailles, either influenced by the court, or jealous of the inclination which the French guards had manifested to partake in the honour of guarding their monarch, requested an additional regiment to assist him in preserving tranquillity and order at the palace; and the regiment of Flanders dragoons was accordingly ordered for this service. On the 1st of October an entertainment (the first that was ever given in public at Versailles by that body) was given by the *gardes-du-corps*, or king's body guard, to the officers of the regiment of Flanders; and to augment the unpopularity of the circumstance, it was given in the royal saloon. Several of the officers of the national guard, with others of the military, were invited. At the second course, four toasts were given: "The king, and the queen, the dauphin, and the royal family." "The nation" was proposed, but, according to a number of witnesses, expressly rejected by the *gardes-du-corps*.

The king was just returned from hunting ; and the queen, having been informed of the gaiety of the scene, persuaded his majesty to accompany her with the heir apparent to the saloon, which was now filled with soldiers—the grenadiers of Flanders and the Swiss chaf-seurs having been admitted to the dessert. The queen appeared with the dauphin in her arms, affectionate as she was lovely, and carried the royal infant through the saloon, amidst the acclamations and murmurs of the spectators. Fired with enthusiasm the soldiers drank the health of the king, the queen, and the dauphin, with their swords drawn ; and the royal guests bowed respectfully, and retired.

The entertainment, which had hitherto been conducted with some degree of order, now became a scene of entire confusion. Nothing was omitted to inflame the passions of the military. The music played the favourite air—"O Richard, O my king, the world abandons thee ;" the ladies of the court distributed *white cockades*, the antipatriot ensign ; and even some of the national guard, it is said, had the weakness to accept them. In the height of this political banquet, it is affirmed, and there is indeed little cause to doubt it, that many expressions of marked disrespect towards the assembly and the nation escaped from the officers of the *gardes-du-corps*, and others of the military : this however might easily have happened in such circumstances, without the least premeditation or evil design.

During these transactions the city of Paris was afflicted with all the evils of famine. Either no bread was to be obtained, or bread of so bad a quality, that the populace, always mistrustful and suspicious, were not without their alarms of a criminal design upon the lives, or at least the health, of the inhabitants. Such was the state of things when the news arrived of the fatal banquet at Versailles. The circumstances, which we have related, were strangely magnified ; and all the suspicions which were entertained respecting the design of dissolving the assembly, and carrying off the sovereign, were added in exaggeration. At the same time

the mutual resentment of the contending parties hourly augmented; and the imprudent conduct of the minority exposed them to every insult. White and black cockades were worn as signals of defiance. They were torn out of the hats of the wearers by the mob; but such was the enthusiasm of one of these votaries of party, that he is said to have picked up from the ground this relic of loyalty, to have kissed it respectfully, and attempted to replace it in his hat. Every measure that could be taken by the three hundred directors of the municipality to prevent the spreading of the insurrection was taken—in vain! Early on the morning of the memorable 5th of October, a woman sallied out from the quarter of St. Eustacia, and entering the corps-de-garde, and seizing a drum, paraded the adjacent streets beating an alarm, and exciting the people by clamours respecting the scarcity of bread. She was soon joined by a very numerous mob, chiefly of women, and repaired immediately to the Hôtel de Ville. A few of the committee of the commune were assembled; and M. Gouvion, at the head of the national guard, endeavoured to prevent their entrance: but the soldiers, swayed either by gallantry, humanity, or disaffection, gave way, and permitted them to pass. Some of the women, who by their air and manner appeared of a superior class, entered with good humour into conversation with the committee, and pleaded eloquently the cause of their companions, who under various circumstances of misery came to ask for relief. But the greater number, both by their appearance and their conduct, shewed that they were collected from the lowest rank of indigence and depravity. With horrid imprecations they demanded bread and arms; they exclaimed with violence against the pusillanimity of the men, and threatened the lives of the whole committee, and particularly of M. Bailly and the marquis de la Fayette. Others penetrated the magazine of arms; and a third troop ascended the belfry, where they attempted to strangle the abbé Lefevre. In one of the halls two furies endeavoured to set fire to the

public papers, but were happily prevented by Stanislaus Maillard, who had rendered himself so famous at the taking of the Bastille.

This young patriot, finding all endeavours to resist the fury of the mob in vain, employed a new stratagem to preserve his country. He applied to the commanding officer for his authority; and having obtained it, he proceeded down the stairs of the Hôtel de Ville, which were filled with women, and seizing a drum, which lay at the door, he offered to put himself at the head of the insurgents, the universal clamour of whom was to proceed to Versailles. By an unanimous shout of applause Maillard was chosen captain of this turbulent troop; and by his authority the assembly was adjourned to the Champs Elisées. When arrived at this general rendezvous their numbers amounted to upwards of eight thousand; and their first measure was to surround their chief, and to insist upon his leading them to the arsenal to equip themselves completely with arms. Fortunately he had authority enough to make himself heard, and to convince them that the arms had been removed from the arsenal; and he had even sufficient address to engage them to lay aside the weapons with which they had provided themselves, by representing to them, that since their object was to supplicate the assembly for justice and for bread, they would operate more forcibly on the compassion of that body, by appearing as distressed petitioners, than with arms in their hands. They departed for Versailles about noon, preceded by a company of armed men, and guarded in the rear by the volunteers of the Bastille, whom Maillard had prepared for that purpose.

Unfortunately the fanaticism of the moment was communicated to the grenadiers. They not only declared, "that they could not turn their bayonets against the poor women who came to ask for bread," but intimated an inclination themselves to proceed to Versailles. Their spokesman declaimed loudly against the committee of subsistence, against the gardes-du-corps, and concluded, "that the people were misera-

ble, and the source of the evil was at Versailles; that they must go and find out the king, and bring him to Paris." While the marquis de la Fayette reasoned, insisted, threatened, the tumult increased from all quarters; an immense crowd armed with sticks, pikes, guns, &c. rushed from the suburbs; and though the national guard appeared not in the most tractable disposition, the mayor and municipality probably conceived it to be the only means of preventing mischief at Versailles to permit their departure with their commander at their head. The marquis therefore received an order to depart for Versailles, and it was most cheerfully obeyed by the national guard.

The representatives of the nation, the majority of whom at least were totally unconscious of what was passing in Paris, were assembled on the 5th, in expectation of receiving back the constitutional articles sanctioned by the king. M. Mounier was then president. The sitting opened with reading a letter from the king, in which he pleaded "the difficulty of judging partially of the constitution; adding, however, that in the confidence that the new articles were calculated to establish the happiness and prosperity of the kingdom, he accepted them; but with one positive condition, that from the spirit of the whole system the executive power should have its entire effect in the hands of the monarch. He concluded with observing, that though these constitutional articles did not all indiscriminately present him with the idea of perfection, yet he thought it proper to pay this respect to the wish of the assembly, and to the *alarming circumstances* which so strongly pressed him to desire the re-establishment of peace, order, and confidence.

This letter by no means proved acceptable to the assembly; the popular members marked in strong terms their disapprobation of this provisional assent, which only seemed to be given in consequence of the alarming circumstances of the nation. In the course of the debate many allusions were made to the indecent festival of the military which disgraced Versailles on the

preceding week. The insults offered to the nation and the national cockade were pointedly mentioned, as well as the menaces of the soldiery. A motion was at length made, that the guilty persons on that occasion should be delivered up to the rigour of the law, and that the accusations which had been now insinuated should be formed into a criminal process. At these words the count de Mirabeau rose. "I begin," said he; "by declaring that I consider the motion as supremely impolitic; nevertheless, if it is persisted in, I am ready to produce the details, and to sign them with my own hand. But this assembly must first declare that the person of the king *alone* is sacred, and that all other individuals, whatever their station, are equally subjects, and responsible to the laws." The prudence of the president and the assembly prevailed over the rashness of both parties. The motion was withdrawn; and it was decreed, that the president should wait on the king to request a simple acceptance of the constitutional articles. The assembly was frequently alarmed, during the course of this discussion, by repeated intelligence that all Paris was advancing to Versailles. Maillard conducted his tumultuous troop with uncommon address. When he came within sight of Versailles he arranged them in the ranks; and advertised them, that as they were entering a place where they were not expected, they must be careful, by the cheerfulness of their appearance and the regularity of their conduct, to excite no alarms in the inhabitants. When arrived at the gate of the national assembly, Maillard undertook to speak for them. He entered attended by fifteen of the women, and persuaded the rest to wait for his return at the gate. His address had two objects: "to entreat that the assembly would devise some method of relieving the dreadful scarcity of bread which prevailed at Paris, and which he said had been occasioned by the interception of the convoys, and by the monopolists; and to solicit that the gardes-du-corps might be ordered to assume the national cockade." He had scarcely finished, when a national cockade was presented to him

on the part of the gardes du-corps, as a proof that they had already adopted it. Maillard shewed it to the women, who immediately answered by loud acclamations of *Vive le roi, & M M. les gardes-du-corps!* A deputation was immediately appointed to wait on the king with this intelligence.

The king had gone that morning to take the diversion of shooting in the woods of Meudon; and in the midst of his sport intelligence was brought, "that a most formidable band of women were on their way from Paris, exclaiming for bread." "Alas!" answered the king, "if I had it, I should not wait to be asked." On his return, as soon as he mounted his horse, a chevalier of St. Louis fell upon his knees and beseeched his majesty not to be afraid. "I never was afraid in my life," returned the king.

On his arrival at Versailles, he found the gardes-du-corps and the national guard under arms, and the palace surrounded by a mob. With the deputation from the assembly five of the women were introduced to his majesty, who, on hearing of the distresses of the metropolis, was extremely moved, and the women sympathized in the feelings of the monarch. Louisa Chabry, a young woman who was employed in some of the branches of sculpture, and was only seventeen years of age, fainted. When she recovered she desired leave to kiss the king's hand, who embraced her, and dismissed her with an elegant compliment. The women without door could scarcely believe the report of those who had been admitted. In the mean time the king signed an order for bringing corn from Senlis and de Lagni, and for removing every obstacle which impeded the supply of Paris. This order was reported to the women, and they retired with acclamations of gratitude and joy.

This band of Amazons was no sooner dispersed than it was succeeded by another, headed by M. Brunout, a soldier of the Parisian guard, whom they had compelled to assume the unpleasant office of their leader. It is uncertain upon what provocation M. Savonieres,

a lieutenant in the gardes-du-corps, and two other officers, imprudently singled out Brunout from his company, and chased him along the ranks with their drawn sabres. The unhappy man was upon the point of being cut to pieces with their sabres, when one of the national guard of Versailles fired upon M. Savonieres, and broke his arm, and by that means saved the life of Brunout: and this incident is said to have greatly increased that unfortunate antipathy which the people afterwards manifested by atrocious acts of cruelty to the gardes-du-corps.

Whether there was indeed a concerted plan to carry off the king to Metz, or whether the court was really terrified by the accident which we have just recounted, it is impossible to determine; but the king's carriages were ordered to the gate of the castle which communicates with the orangery. The national guard of Versailles, however, who occupied the post, refused to permit them to pass; and the king himself was resolute in his determination to stay, declaring, "that he would rather perish, than that the blood of the people should be spilled in his quarrel."

The assembly continued sitting; but the session was tumultuous, and interrupted by the shouts and harangues of the Parisian fish-women, who filled the galleries*. A letter, however, from the king was read, deploring the scarcity of provisions, and recommending that effectual means might be taken to remedy that calamity; and in a little time after M. Mounier entered with the pure and simple assent of the king to the constitutional articles. The assembly was then adjourned;

* The superior wisdom of the American congress over the French assembly was manifest in many instances, but in none more than in this, that their deliberations were all private, or at least in the presence of few auditors. The orators of the French assemblies, too eager for applause, imprudently opened their galleries or tribunes to the public. The least pernicious effect of this injudicious arrangement was, that the assembly became a mere theatre, and the members only actors, whose sole view was to catch the applause of the galleries. In the end the auditors became their masters, and used them as they deserved.

but the applause which was bestowed on its proceedings was mingled with affecting murmurs and complaints, the multitude crying out that they were actually starving, and that the majority of them had eaten nothing for upwards of twenty four hours. The president therefore humanely ordered that provisions should be sought for in every part of the town, and the hall of the assembly was the scene of a miserable, scanty, and tumultuous banquet. Indeed, such was the dreadful famine, that the horse of one of the gardes du corps being killed in a tumult, he was immediately roasted, and greedily devoured by the mob. Previous to the adjournment of the assembly, Maillard and a number of the women set off in carriages, provided by the king, for Paris, carrying with them the king's letter, and the resolves of the national assembly, in the hope of restoring peace to the metropolis.

Darkness and a deluge of rain added to the horrors of the night. The wretched multitudes who had travelled from Paris were exposed, almost famished, to the inclemencies of the weather in the open streets: within the castle all was trepidation; nothing was to be heard from without but imprecations, and the voice of enraged multitudes demanding the lives of the queen and of the gardes-du corps. Towards midnight, however, all appeared tolerably still and peaceable, when the beating of the drums, and the light of innumerable torches, announced the approach of the Parisian army. The marquis de la Fayette on his arrival repaired to the royal closet, and informed the king of the whole proceedings of the day; a part of the national guards were distributed in posts agreeably to the orders of his majesty; the rest were entertained by the inhabitants of Versailles, or retired to lodge in the churches and public edifices, for the remainder of the night; and tranquillity appeared once more perfectly restored.

The troops of vagabonds who had accompanied Maillard, or who had followed the Parisian militia, were chiefly disposed of in the hall of the assembly, and in the great corps-de-garde; and at about five in the morn-

ing the marquis de la Fayette, after having visited all the posts, and found every thing perfectly quiet, retired to his chamber to write to the municipality of Paris, and perhaps in the hope of snatching a few hours repose.

The day began to break at about half past five; and at this period, crowds of women and other desperate persons, breathing vengeance and thirsting for blood, advanced to the castle, which, in the fatal security which the arrival of the Parisian militia inspired, was left unguarded in several places. Some of the iron gates were shut, and some left open. An immense crowd found its way into the *cour des ministres*, and immediately proceeded to the royal gate, which was shut, and a number of the invaders attempted to scale it. Another troop of ruffians proceeded to the chapel court, and another to that of the princes, and by both these avenues penetrated into the royal court. Some hasty dispositions of defence were made by a M. Aguesseau; the gardes-du-corps were soon under arms, and one man was wounded by them in the arm, and another shot dead. The crowd immediately mounted the grand stair-case, where one of the gardes-du-corps, M. Miomandre, endeavoured to dissuade them from their attempt; but he narrowly escaped with his life. M. Tardivet du Repaire hastened to the queen's apartment, in order to prevent the entrance of the banditti; but he was assailed by thousands, and felled to the ground. A villain with a pike attempted to pierce him to the heart; but he had the good fortune to wrest the weapon from his hand, with which he parried the attacks of his enemies, and at length effected his escape. M. Miomandre in the mean time made his way to the queen's apartment. He opened the door, and cried out to a lady whom he saw in the inner chamber—"Save the queen, madam, her life is in danger; I am here alone against two thousand tigers." He shut the door; and after a few minutes resistance was desperately wounded with a pike, and left for dead; though he afterwards recovered.

The queen had been awaked a quarter of an hour before by the clamours of the women who assembled upon the terrace ; but her waiting-woman had satisfied her by saying, " that they were only the women of Paris, who she supposed, not being able to find a lodging, were walking about." But the tumult approaching, and becoming apparently more serious, she rose, dressed herself in haste, and ran to the king's apartment by a private passage. In her way she heard the noise of a pistol and a musket, which redoubled her terror. " My friends," said she to every person she met, " save me and my children." In the king's chamber she found the dauphin, who had been brought there by one of her women ; but the king was gone. Awaked by the tumult, he had seen from a window the multitude pressing towards the great stair-case ; and alarmed for the queen, he hastened to her apartment, and entered at one door in the moment she had quitted it by the other. He returned without loss of time ; and having with the queen brought the princess royal into the chamber, they prepared to face the multitude.

In the mean time the noise and tumult increased, and appeared at the very door of the chamber. Nothing was to be heard but the most dreadful exclamations, with violent and repeated blows against the outer door, a pannel of which was broken. Nothing but instant death was expected by the royal company. Suddenly, however, the tumult seemed to cease—every thing was quiet ; and, a moment after, a gentle rap was heard at the door. It was opened, and in an instant the apartments were filled with the Parisian guard. The officer who conducted them ordered them to ground their arms. " We come," said he, " to save the king ;" and turning to such of the gardes-du-corps as were in the apartments—" We will save you also, gentlemen ; let us from this moment be united."

Unfortunately the national guard arrived too late to prevent all the mischief. Two of the gardes-du-corps were murdered by the mob before the troops could be rallied, and their heads fixed on spikes served as the

standards of this detestable banditti. From the first moment of the alarm the marquis de la Fayette had even exceeded his usual activity. He appeared in every quarter :—"Gentlemen," said he to the Parisian soldiers, "I have pledged my word and honour to the king that nothing belonging to him shall receive injury. If I break my word, I shall be no longer worthy to be your commander." Captain Gondran, the officer who had driven the ruffians from the king's apartment, was not less conspicuous for his activity. The Parisians forced their way in every part through the almost impenetrable mass—surrounded the gardes-du-corps, and placed them in safety under their own colours.

Plunder is however commonly one great object of a mob. The banditti had already begun to strip the palace, and to throw the furniture to each other out of the windows. M. Gondran pursued them from place to place, till the castle was at length completely cleared. Expelled from the palace, they repaired to the stables; but here a sudden stop was put to their depredations by M. Doazon, a farmer-general, and captain of the Paris militia. The horses were all recovered, and brought back in safety to their stalls. Disappointed at length in every view, they departed in a body to Paris; and left Versailles entirely free, and under the protection of the national guard. The most generous expressions of kindness and gratitude took place between the gardes-du-corps and the national guard. The former considered the others as their deliverers; while the latter evinced every inclination that they should in future form one united corps.

The royal family now ventured to shew themselves at a balcony, and received the most lively acclamations of respect from the soldiers and the people. But whether it had been planned by the popular party, or whether it was the immediate impulse of the multitude—but the former is most probable—at the first a single voice, or a few voices, exclaimed—"The king to Paris!" and this was instantly followed by an universal acclamation enforcing the same demand. After some con-

sultation with the marquis de la Fayette, the king addressed them :—" You wish me to go to Paris—I will go, on the condition that I am to be accompanied by my wife and children." He was answered by reiterated acclamations of *Vive le roi !*

Before the departure of the king, the national assembly was convened ; and, on the motion of M. Mirabeau, passed a solemn decree, " that the assembly was inseparable from the person of the king." A deputation of one hundred members was also appointed to accompany the king to Paris. During the preparations for the journey, the gardes-du-corps changed hats and swords with the grenadiers and national guards, and both they and the regiment of Flanders desired leave to mix indiscriminately in the ranks. It was two o'clock in the afternoon before the procession set out. During the progress all was gaiety and joy among the soldiers and the spectators ; and such was the respect in which the French nation still held the name and person of their king, that the multitude were superstitiously persuaded that the royal presence would actually put an end to the famine*. On his arrival, the king was congratulated by the municipality, and declared his approbation of the loyalty which the city of Paris manifested. On this occasion he gave one proof, among several others, which he had before given, that however he might be wrought upon by misrepresentation and evil counsels, his character was in the general neither deficient in good sense nor firmness. As they ascended the stairs of the Hôtel de Ville, the marquis de la Fayette requested the king that he would either assure the people himself, or permit some other person to assure them in his name, that he would fix his abode in Paris. " I feel no objection," replied the monarch, " to fix my abode in my good city of Paris : but I have not yet formed any determination on the subject ; and I will make no promise which I do not positively mean to fulfil."

* The popular exclamation was, as they proceeded along, " We are bringing the baker, the baker's wife, and the little journeyman."

C H A P. IV.

*Emigration of the aristocratic members of the assembly—
Title of King of the French—Duke of Orleans retires
to England—A baker hanged by the mob at Paris—
Riot act—New division of the empire—Church lands ap-
plied to the exigencies of the state—Lettres de cachet
abolished—Committee appointed to inspect the pension
list—Distinction of orders abolished—Opposition of the
provincial states and parliaments—Riots at Marseilles
and Toulon—Melancholy event at Senlis—Debate on
the eligibility of ministers to the national assembly—
Corsica declared a constituent part of the French em-
pire—Plan of the caisse de l'extraordinaire—Refusal
of a donation from Geneva—of an alliance with Bra-
bant—Resistance of the parliament of Britany—Affair
of the marquis de Favras—Municipalities made respon-
sible for damages sustained by riots—Suppression of
monasteries—Emission of Assignats—Gabelle, &c. abo-
lished—Reform of the jurisprudence—Troubles in St.
Domingo, &c.—Publication of the red book—Religious
insurrections at Toulouse, Montabon, and Nismes—
Right of making war and peace—Organization of the
clergy—Abolition of titles, &c.—Grand confederation—
Return of M. d'Orleans.*

WHATEVER might have been the intentions of either party in producing the riots of the 5th and 6th of October, the removal of the king to the metropolis was, for the moment, productive of the happiest consequences. It satisfied the suspicious and inquiet minds of the Parisians; it brought their sovereign more immediately in connexion with them, and strengthened in some degree the bands of union: nay, chimerical as it may appear, the superstitious fancy of the populace, that the presence of the king would terminate the famine, was in some degree realised. The abundance and profusion which always accompany a court, procured some relief to the indigent; and the

consciousness of the supply that would be necessary, served to replenish the impoverished markets.

The aristocratic party connected with the court, were the persons who manifested the deepest regret on this occasion. If they really entertained any design of conveying the king to a distant part, it was frustrated by this measure; and, independent of this, they had cause to be apprehensive of the fury of the populace, should any incident happen to excite their ardent and sanguinary resentment.

In the assembly itself, notwithstanding the vote which declared the legislative body to be inseparable from the person of the monarch, some objections were strongly insisted on against the projected removal; and indeed the sequel evinced them to be but too well founded. It was said, that the deputies would no longer be the legislators of the nation; they must obey the arbitrary mandates of the populace, and even the freedom of debate would be annihilated. To remove their scruples, a letter was directed to them by the king, inviting them to resume their session in the metropolis; and this was powerfully seconded by a deputation from the citizens of Paris. By the mouth of their speaker, M. Brissot, the citizens professed "their joy at the expected removal of the representative body;" they pledged themselves by a solemn oath "to protect the persons of the deputies, and the freedom of debate*;" they intimated that they had forwarded an address to all the provinces and communities of France, to satisfy them relative to the late proceeding; to assure them that the commune of Paris was actuated by the most perfect loyalty to the king, the most inviolable obedience to the national assembly, and a sincere paternal regard to all the municipalities of the kingdom.

Though this address might probably diminish the fears of a part of the assembly, and certainly hastened their removal; yet the apprehensions of the aristocratic part of that body were not removed by these empty pro-

* The oaths of a mob never can be deserving of credit.

essions. Numberless passports were solicited on various excuses; and among these some deserters from the popular cause were observed with regret. M. Mounier and count Lally Tolendal retired in disgust. Many of the high aristocratic members took refuge in other countries, where they applied themselves indefatigably to what is always a destructive measure, that of exciting a foreign war against their country; and by this fatal step brought ultimate ruin upon their king, their country, and themselves. To prevent, however, as much as possible similar emigrations, the national assembly decreed, "that passports to the members should be only granted for a short and limited period; and that as to unlimited passports on account of ill health, they should not be granted till substitutes were elected; that in future all substitutes should be elected by the citizens at large, or by their representatives, without any regard to orders; and that eight days after the first session at Paris, a call of the house should be instituted."

A proclamation ascertaining the rights of citizens was next decreed; the power of originating laws was exclusively confined to the assembly; and the executive power was prohibited the liberty of creating or suppressing posts or offices without an act of the legislature. The power of laying taxes was also vested exclusively in the representatives of the people; the responsibility of ministers was established; and the pernicious phraseology in the proclamations and other acts of the king, "*such is our pleasure*," &c. was abolished. The title of the king was changed from "the king of France," to that of "king of the French," as more expressive of the office, which is a king or ruler of men, and not of the soil or territory. Some difficulty arose respecting the title of king of Navarre; for that petty state, considering itself rather as the ally than as a part of the empire, had not sent representatives to the national assembly. The deputies of the great provinces, however, strenuously opposed this title, and asserted that the king might as well be styled count of Provence, duke of Brittany, king of

Corfica, as king of Navarre: it was therefore agreed to expunge the title.

Tranquillity, however, was by no means perfectly restored; and to repeat the vague and idle reports that every day were spread, to the alarm of the people, would require volumes: for several nights the houses of individuals were marked with chalk, and the colours, it was said, denoted whether they were to be plundered, burnt, or the inhabitants murdered. In this state of suspicion and ferment, innumerable reports, some true, and some false, and some, the foundations of which have never yet been completely explored, were industriously propagated: among others, was a rumour which represented the duke d'Orleans as harbouring criminal designs upon the crown, or the regency at least. The marquis de la Fayette, who was always forward in every thing that might contribute to the union of order and good government with the blessings of liberty, undertook to persuade the duke to withdraw himself from the public for at least a short time. He was invested with some public commission, rather nominal than real, and solicited from the assembly a passport for England. The count de Mirabeau, and some others of the more intimate friends of the duke, opposed strenuously his retiring, as more likely to give credit to the reports against him than to disprove them; but he chose to retire from the scene of difficulty and danger. At Boulogne his highness was stopped by the municipality, notwithstanding his passport and detained till set free by a subsequent order of the assembly.

On the 19th of October the representatives of the French nation held their first session at Paris. A deputation from the commune waited on them immediately with the congratulations of the city, at the head of which were M. Bailly the mayor, and the marquis de la Fayette. After the answer of the president, which was interrupted by peals of applause, the count de Mirabeau embraced the opportunity to press a vote of thanks to the mayor and the commander of the national guards for their essential services to the nation, and "thus (he said) to signalize their first session in the metropolis, by a public

act of justice, which was calculated to confirm the authority of the civil powers, and to repress the false zeal of imprudent friends, as well as the malignant designs of the enemies of freedom." The vote of thanks was decreed amidst the loudest acclamations, and the session of that day concluded, contrary to general expectation, without the smallest disturbance.

Neither this act of respect towards the magistracy of the city, however, nor the departure of the duke d'Orleans, could entirely prevent the horror of massacre and insurrection; and the assembly had scarcely been established two days at Paris, before a most atrocious murder, committed almost in its very presence, obliged them to adopt a stronger measure to prevent civil outrage and bloodshed. On the 21st of October an unfortunate baker, of the name of François, who resided in the street *Marché Palu*, close to the *Archeveché*, where the assembly at that period was convened, was singled out as the victim of popular phrensy. After having served out his usual quantity of bread in the morning, he found his door still besieged by several persons who had not yet been able to obtain a supply. Among these was a woman, who is said to have borne a particular enmity against the unfortunate baker, and who insisted on searching the house for bread. On entering, she found three loaves which the journeymen had reserved for their own use; and snatching up one of them in her hand, she raised the injurious outcry, that François had reserved a part of the provision which ought to have been distributed for the use of the poor, and that he was a monopolist and a monster. The complaint was no sooner made public than an immense mob was collected; the baker was dragged forcibly to the *Grève*; and there, notwithstanding all the efforts of the municipality in his favour, he was hanged.

So outrageous a defiance of authority, so complete a subversion of law and justice, could not escape the pointed notice of the legislature. The first movements of popular fury, on their deliverance from despotism, might seem excusable; but the populace of Paris had now

reached the summit of licentiousness and injustice. They had erected themselves into a power superior to the magistrates; and unless some decisive measure was taken, there was danger that the representative body itself would no longer be able to maintain its authority. An act was immediately passed for the prevention and the dispersion of riots, which authorised the magistrates, on any number of persons assembling, to call in the aid of the military, and to proclaim martial law. A red flag was to be displayed from the principal window of the town-house; and from that moment all assemblies of the populace, with or without arms, were to be considered as criminal. Should the mob refuse to disperse on being required by the magistrates, the military were then to act on the offensive; those who escaped might be arrested; and if unarmed, and they had been guilty of no act of violence, they were to be imprisoned for one year: if found in arms, they were declared liable to three years imprisonment; and if they had committed any violence, were judged guilty of a capital offence. To give effect and vigour to this law, the committee of research was ordered to make all necessary inquiries into treasonable offences; and the constitutional committee to form a plan as soon as possible of a tribunal for the trial of all crimes of *leze-nation*; and in the mean time this power was for the present vested in the court of the Chatelet.

These efforts of the assembly were vigorously seconded by the municipality. The murderer of François was arrested on the very day on which he committed the crime; and on the following day was executed, with another unfortunate person who was also convicted of exciting sedition. The king and queen sympathised in the distress of the unfortunate widow of François: by the hands of the duke de Liancourt they sent her two thousand crowns; the commune also sent a deputation with a present to her; his remains were decently interred at the public expence; and the king and queen undertook to become the sponsors at the baptism of the child with which his widow was pregnant at the time of his death.

The same disposition to violence, the same proneness to suspicion, that appeared in the capital, was no less active in the provinces. At Alençon, the viscount Caraman, who had been sent thither by marshal Contades with a detachment of horse, was on the point of being destroyed by the populace, on a most improbable rumour that he was inimical to the revolution. And at Vernon, a M. Planter, deputy of the commune at Paris, who had been sent by the magistrates to purchase corn, was seized by the mob, and after a mock trial, the fatal cord was twice fixed round his neck; when Mr. Nesham, a young Englishman, who happened to be in the town, opposed himself singly to the violence of the populace, and rescued from instant death a respectable member of society. For this noble act of courage and humanity, Mr. Nesham was honoured with the first civic crown which was ever decreed in France; and was presented by the magistrates of Paris with a sword, on which was engraved the honourable testimony of having saved the life of a French citizen. At Lanion, a town in Britany, also, some gentlemen who had been sent from Brest for the purchase of provisions incurred a similar danger with M. Planter. A detachment, however, of the national guard from Brest soon restored order and tranquillity, and obliged the inhabitants of Lanion to make satisfaction for the outrages they had committed.

The next important object which occupied the attention of the legislative body, was to reform and organize the representation of the kingdom. A plan was proposed by the abbé Sieyes for this purpose, in which we equally admire the ingenuity of the projector, and his industry in completing it. The ancient division of the kingdom into provinces, each possessing what is termed its peculiar rights, each governed by peculiar laws, and each forming in itself a little kingdom, with its own parliament, its own metropolis, its own jurisdiction, was found to be productive of a rivalry and jealousy, which nothing but the strong arm of despotism could coerce. In the present glow of pa-

triotism, the present transport of liberty, the minds of men were disposed to sacrifices and renunciations; but there was the utmost reason to apprehend, that should this auspicious crisis not be improved, should the generous feelings of the moment be suffered to subside, those petty local prejudices, which weaken and disjoint a state, would again revive; and as every government which approaches the republican form is naturally weaker than that which partakes of absolute monarchy, they could only revive to distract, and perhaps dismember, the empire. Besides the radical division into provinces, the kingdom was also divided fantastically and irregularly upon other principles. It was divided into governments, agreeably to the military order; into generalities, according to the order of administration; into dioceses, according to the ecclesiastical order; and also subdivided in the judicial order into bailiwicks, seneschals, &c. The divisions and subdivisions were all without regularity, conformity, or proportion; neither adapted to population nor territory. A new arrangement was therefore not only essential to an equal representation of the people, but to the uniformity of government, and the security and permanence of the constitution.

Three principles were attended to in forming the new representative system; territory, population, and taxation; and it was supposed that, by the combination of these three elementary principles, they would serve mutually to correct each other.

According to the new scheme of the representation, therefore, the whole kingdom was divided into eighty-three larger sections, which were called departments, and each of which comprehended a space of about three hundred and twenty-four square leagues; each department was divided into districts, the number of which were not to be less than three, nor more than nine; each district was again subdivided into cantons of four square leagues in extent. Three degrees were preserved in the administrative assemblies; but only two in the elective. The first were the assemblies of

the canton, which were called primary, and which were to choose the electors for the department; the second were the electoral assemblies, which were to return the representatives to the national assembly. The whole number of representatives was to be seven hundred and forty-five; of which two hundred and forty-seven were attached to the territory, and of which each department was to nominate three, except that of Paris, which nominated only one. Two hundred and forty-nine were attributed to population, each department nominating in proportion to its population; and two hundred and forty-nine were attributed to direct contribution, and each department was to nominate representatives in proportion to the contribution which it paid to the state. The functions of the elective assemblies were limited entirely to the right of election. The administrative body was to be elected by the electoral assemblies; and in each department was constituted a superior board of administration; in each district, an inferior or subordinate administration; and to these were committed the superintendence of the collection of the revenue, and all the details of interior administration.

On this great and able system of interior policy we have only to remark, that the division of the kingdom into parts too small to act offensively in a separate state, was, for the reasons which we have already assigned, a measure fraught with wisdom, and favourable to liberty. The preserving distinct the electoral and administrative powers was equally judicious. The mode of electing by primary and secondary assemblies, was assuredly the only adequate means of obviating the fatal effects of faction and venality. As to the basis on which the representation was formed, many doubts will be entertained by politicians concerning its expediency: the adjusting of it to three principles is certainly a complex mode of proceeding; nor will it be easy to assign a reason why it should not have been instituted on the simple and obvious principle of popula-

tion; or rather, of territory regulated as to the number of representatives by the ratio of population.

After all that had been performed by the assembly, the utter derangement of the finances, and the actual deficiency of means to supply the exigencies of the nation, threatened loudly the destruction of the state. In this difficult and hazardous predicament, the popular party resolved upon a bold and dangerous measure, which no apology can justify, and which it would not be easy even to excuse; and this was, to sacrifice the estates of the church to the exigencies of the state*.

The most singular circumstance attending this unprecedented alienation is, that it was first proposed by an ecclesiastic. The young and ardent bishop of Autun, M. Talleyrand Perigord, whose appointment was already considerable, and whose rank and abilities afforded him the most brilliant prospects in the ecclesiastical career, ascended the tribune on the 10th of October; and after stating the necessities of the nation, the exhausted state of the finances, and utter impossibility of remedying them by any thing but a strong measure; with a disinterestedness which astonished the assembly, and with a boldness which for the moment silenced opposition, he observed that the state had yet an immense resource in the possessions of the clergy. He asserted, that the revenues of the clergy are at the disposition of the nation; that all sinecures might and ought to be suppressed; and that the right which every ecclesiastic possessed in the revenues of his church was limited to that of a decent subsistence. The annual revenue of the church he estimated at one hundred and fifty millions;

* The extreme necessities of the state was the apology that was urged for this flagrant act of injustice; but though we are far from wishing to countenance the vulgar opinion "that the French are a nation of atheists," yet it is too certain that many of their leaders were of that description, and this most impolitic measure we are inclined to think originated in the *irreligious* prejudices of some of its projectors. However this may be, it has had the most fatal consequences.—It shews what bad politicians *infidels* are, and how improper to be entrusted with the important business of legislating for a great nation.

one hundred millions of which he proposed to appropriate still to the purposes of public worship, and fifty to the public service. This, with a vigorous exertion of public economy, he asserted, would supply the annual deficit, and would redeem the heavy and oppressive salt tax, and the sale of offices. His speech contained many other matters in detail, and appeared of such importance that it was ordered to be printed.

The discussion was continued at intervals to the 2d of November: the principal speakers for the affirmative were Messrs. Thouret, Garet, Mirabeau, Barnave, Gouttes, and Dillon; and it was opposed by M. Montlausier, the viscount de Mirabeau, the abbés Maury, Montesquiou, d'Aymar, and the archbishop of Aix. On the one side it was urged, that it was evident the clergy had not a full title as proprietors in the church lands, because no ecclesiastic could sell or dispose of them; that public utility is the supreme law, and ought not to be weighed in a balance against a superstitious regard to what was called the will of the founders; as if a few weak and injudicious individuals ought to bind the nation and posterity; that foundations multiplied by vanity, if suffered to be of eternal duration, would in time absorb the whole property of a nation; as for instance, if every person that ever lived had a sepulchre, there would have been a necessity for overthrowing these barren monuments, in order to find lands for cultivation. They distinguished the estates of the clergy into three kinds: those which were bestowed by the kings, by aggregate corporations, and by individuals. The foundations made by the kings could be only made in the name of the nation, by dismembering the public estate. Those which were made by aggregate bodies fall under the same predicament; every such gift was the undoubted deed, that is, the undoubted property, of the nation.

With respect to the donations of individuals, it was asked, what is property in general? It is a right given by the laws and convention of a state to an individual, to possess exclusively what in a state of nature would have

been the property of all, or of any other person; it is an estate acquired in virtue of the laws*. No law of the nation, it was urged, had constituted the clergy a permanent body; they were created by the nation, they might be destroyed by the nation. This every founder must have seen; and must have seen that it was not in his power to trespass on the rights of the nation. The clergy, it was asserted, were the servants of the state, were authorized to demand a subsistence from the state; and consequently, if they possessed property, it could be for no other purpose than to relieve the public from the charge. The same observations were applied to whatever estates might have been acquired by the economy or diligence of the ecclesiastics themselves; and it was asked, whether it was not of importance to religion and morals, that a more equal distribution of the ecclesiastical revenues should henceforward reward the industrious, and restrain the luxury of those who were a disgrace to the sacred order?

The advocates of the clergy, on the other hand, maintained, that their opponents had grounded their arguments on a principle which was drawn from the dark and abstract subtleties of metaphysics, in opposition to the dictates of common sense, the evidence of history, and the universal practice of mankind; that unless the rights of property were held sacred, civil society was dissolved, the confidence that ought to be its support was for ever removed, and men sunk again into a state of nature, that is, of barbarism and rapine; that the estates of the cler-

* Though we endeavour as completely as is consistent with our limits to give an abstract of the arguments that were stated in the assembly on every important question we would not be understood to assent to all that we quote. The sentiment which we have just repeated is wretched sophistry; and if it was admitted, it would follow that a legislature might at any time enact an Agrarian law, which would be the most outrageous act of tyranny and injustice. It is not true that property has merely *originated* from the law; but, on the contrary, one great end and reason for the *institution* of laws is the *protection* of property. We would neither adopt the language of the national assembly nor of Mr. Burke---Man *has* imprescriptible rights---God forbid it was otherwise! and one of these is the *right of property*.

gy were never actually possessed by the nation ; and were sanctioned by the same titles, the same authorities, as the estates of private citizens : a part was obtained by bequest or assignment ; and a part was the effect of economy and industry in the clergy themselves : that to deprive the church of its property, was to annihilate it ; that infinite scandal would accrue to the nation from such a measure ; and that religion itself would receive a fatal wound. The clergy concluded by offering a quarter of their revenues to supply the deficiency of the finances, and, if that should not be sufficient, a half : but the offer was most imprudently rejected, and it was decreed, " that the estates of the church were at the disposal of the nation, which undertakes to provide for the decent support of the clergy ; and that in consequence no clergyman ought to possess less in any parish than 1200 livres, or about 60l. per annum, independent of the parsonage-house, garden glebe, &c."

While the discussion concerning the estates of the clergy was in agitation, the assembly abolished formally *lettres de cachet* and all arbitrary imprisonment ; decreed, that henceforth no man could be imprisoned but for offences against the laws ; and appointed a committee for inquiring into the offences of persons detained in the state prisons. They also abolished the difference of habit which marked the different orders in the national assembly. They refused to invest their own members with any peculiar immunities ; and in particular *disclaimed the privilege of franking letters*. An inquiry into the nature and amount of the pensions paid out of the public funds was also instituted, and a committee appointed for the purpose.

The decree concerning the clergy was followed on the 3d by another, which suspended the parliaments from the exercise of their functions ; and on the 5th the final blow was given to the feudal system, and all its consequences, by the famous decree which utterly abolished all distinction of orders.

It is evident that measures so hostile to the interests of so many individuals, possessed both of consequence

and power, could not be suffered without opposition. The bishop of Treguier was one of the first to draw the sword of hostility against the assembly: he publicly declaimed against all the measures of the new legislature, represented them as fatal to religion, and as reversing the whole system of government. About the same period, a considerable number of the members of the parliament of Toulouse, who styled themselves of the order of nobility, published an invitation to the clergy and the *tiers état*, to unite with them in an effort "to restore to religion its beneficial influence; to the laws, their force and action; to the monarch, his liberty and lost authority."

But what might appear more formidable still, was the convoking of the ancient provincial states. Those of Bearn were actually assembled. Those of Dauphiné convoked themselves also without the king's authority; and, contrary to their own positive resolution, they restored the distinction of orders in their form of assembling. The states of Cambray protested against the decree concerning the church lands. In Britany also some strong efforts of party were made, which could scarcely fail to intimidate a body less resolute than the national assembly.

The parliaments were not backward in joining this league against the new arrangements. The chamber of vacations at Rouen registered indeed the law which suspended their powers, but transmitted a secret protest to the king, who, justly irritated at such a proceeding, immediately laid it before the assembly. So decisive a defiance of the legislative authority demanded exemplary punishment; and the assembly resolved, "that this protest should be forthwith submitted to the tribunal, which for the time had cognizance of the crimes of leze-nation; and that the king should be entreated to name another chamber of vacations, which might register without any comment the decree of the 3d of November." So decided a step had its due effect upon the refractory parliament. Instead of persisting in its opposition, its first step was to endeavour to explain a-

way the malignant spirit of the protest ; to represent, that the decree was registered in the fairest and most simple manner ; and that the paper in question was meant merely as a testimony of respect to his majesty. Satisfied with this submission, the king wrote to the president with his own hand, soliciting the pardon of the offending chamber of vacations, which, after some debate, was at length accorded. The parliament of Metz, in the same spirit but with less violence, protested against the decree which suspended its functions : the assembly ordered the offending members to their bar ; but the parliament finding little support from the people, and terrified for the consequences, applied to the municipality to intercede with the legislative body in their favour. A decree of amnesty was therefore passed, and the pardon of the magistrates granted to the entirety of the citizens.

In Provence, and particularly at Marseilles, commotions were excited by a fatal jealousy between the members of the parliament and the municipality. A cat was hanged by the populace at Marseilles, and the aristocratic party insisted upon it that the execution was emblematical. The intendant of that city was particularly odious to the people, and he requested a military force to assist him in preserving order. The military were received with infinite courtesy by the inhabitants : but the harmony was not of long continuance ; for the disturbances broke out afresh, on an attempt being made by M. Caraman, the commander of the troops, to reform the constitution of the national guard. An invitation was posted up in different parts of the city, requiring the citizens to repair to the turret to oppose this reform. Thither immediately the military was ordered, and one of the citizens was killed. The people carried his body through the streets ; and entered the house of an obnoxious person, M. la Fleche ; the military were again called out, and twenty-three persons were arrested. The severity of the prévôt-general, M. Bournisac, in prosecuting on account of these commotions, and his injustice in directing accusations against

innocent citizens who were guiltless of every public offence, continued to promote instead of appeasing the troubles. The indignation of the national assembly was at length roused by these proceedings. The prosecution of the offenders was taken out of the hands of M. Bournisac, and referred to the seneschal court of Marseilles, and peace was once more established.

It was natural, in such a state of things, that jealousies should arise between the people and the soldiery; and these jealousies were certainly fomented with industry by the enemies of the new constitution. At Toulon, M. Albert de Rioms, commandant of the marine, a man of high military reputation, but supposed to be infected with aristocratical prejudices, offended the populace by expressing himself in a contemptuous manner of the national guard, and prohibiting the workmen in the arsenal from wearing the national cockade. His rashness, however, had nearly cost him his life; a mob assembled, and but for the prudence of the national guard, would have sacrificed him to their resentment. He and four of his principal officers, who were accused of having given orders to fire on the people, were committed to prison to wait the decision of the assembly; and the legislative body judging favourably of the motives of M. Albert, and probably wishing to provoke as little as possible the resentment of any party, passed a decree favourable to the restoration of tranquillity, and liberated the officers.

About the same period a melancholy event, the effect of private revenge, took place at Senlis, which, from the vicinity of that place to Paris, made the greater impression. A soldier, who had been discharged from the national troops, fired on a procession of the citizens as they passed by the house in which he was. An immense multitude rushed impetuously in to seize the culprit; when the house, by design, as was generally believed, blew up, and no less than sixty persons lost their lives, and an immense number were wounded by the explosion.

While the provinces were agitated by these and similar events, the national assembly was divided by contending parties, and not less by the interested contests of private ambition. Among the most important discussions at this period, was that which regarded the eligibility of the executive ministers to seats in the legislative assembly. It was about the beginning of November that the count de Mirabeau, after a long discourse upon the state of the nation and the finances, proposed three motions for the consideration of the assembly: the first regarded the supply of corn and bread; the second contained a proposal for establishing a national bank; and the third imported, "that his majesty's ministers should be invited to a consultative voice in the assembly, till the constitution should have determined the rules by which they were to be governed." So strange a combination as that of the last article with two motions which simply regarded the finance, could not fail to alarm the popular party; and as the count de Mirabeau was not suspected of the purest motives, the discussion of the two first propositions was soon abandoned to make room for the third, which appeared of the greatest magnitude and importance to the nation. It was spiritedly attacked by Messrs Blin, Custine, de Richier, d'Estourmel, and the viscount de Noailles; and it was supported by M. M. de Montmorenci, Garat, jun. by the duke de la Rochefoucault, count Clermont Tonnerre, and others. An adjournment was proposed; and the debate was renewed with considerable spirit the following day, on an amendment proposed by M. Lanjuinais, which excluded completely the members of the national assembly, and for three years after they ceased to be members, from any share in the executive government. By the party which supported the admissibility of ministers to the legislature, it was pleaded, that the presence of ministers was frequently required for the purpose of information; that it would give a dignity and splendour to the officers of the crown; that the public service ought not to deprive any citizen of his rights, and there were none better qualified to

legislate than those who were generally appointed to the high offices of the state. In defence of the motion of M. de Mirabeau in particular it was contended, that in all events it was only a mere temporary measure, and that to this moment no person had doubted of the propriety of the members of the states general acting in a public capacity. On the other hand it was urged, with scarcely less force and energy, that the admission of ministers to a seat and a voice among the representatives of the people, effectually confounded what ought to be preserved essentially distinct, the legislative and executive powers; that the servants of the crown could not without manifest injury be admitted to participate in the highest prerogative, that of legislation. The example of England was adduced as an instance of the ill effects of this system, where two factions are continually kept up in the legislative body; that of the ministers, who are endeavouring to keep their places, and that of the opposition, or those whose endeavour it is to perplex and embarrass the agents of the executive power, in order that they may seize the vacant offices. The count de Mirabeau, highly exasperated, at length moved, "that the motion should only extend to the exclusion of M. Lanjuinais and *himself* from the ministry." It was, however, finally determined in favour of the motion of M. Lanjuinais; and with this addition, with respect to the present constituting assembly, "that no member could accept of any place in the ministry."

Another determination, which was effected with more complete unanimity, will probably meet with more general approbation. The island of Corsica, from the period in which it was conquered, had never been firmly attached to the old government of France, and had been retained in subjection only by the strong fetters of military despotism. They had never ratified the infamous contract by which a nation was transferred, like a flock of sheep, from the dominion of Genoa to that of France. The meeting of the states-general had revived within the bosoms of these brave men the untamed spirit of liberty, and the hope of being once more rein-

stated in their rights. These hopes were succeeded by a sinister rumour, that they were once more to be ceded to the detested domination of Genoa; or, that at least they were to be still retained as a servile appendage to a land of freedom. In such a state of doubt and perplexity, the passions of the multitude are easily excited. They proposed immediately to form a national guard. The citizens of Bastia assembled for that purpose in the parish church of St. John. The army marched to disperse them, and in the contest some lives were lost. In this state of ferment the island remained, when a deputation appeared at the bar of the assembly, entreating, in the name of the people of Corsica, that they might be irrevocably united by a decree of the legislature to the French nation, as a constituent part of the empire. Such a request was too reasonable and too flattering to the assembly not to be instantly complied with; and this was followed by a motion of the count de Mirabeau (who lamented that his youth had been disgraced by participating in the conquest of this island), to restore all who had emigrated, except on account of civil crimes, to their rank, their rights, and their property.

Notwithstanding all that had been effected in favour of the people, the state still continued to be oppressed under an intolerable weight of distress, occasioned by the total disorder of the finances. The public deficiency was an immense gulf, which no patriotic sacrifice was powerful enough to close, and the pecuniary embarrassments of the nation seemed rather to increase. The current specie of the country was swept away by emigration; and the royal treasury was exhausted by the purchase of corn and provisions. A miracle was necessary to reinstate the public affairs, and this miracle was expected from the minister of finance. But, in such a state of things, what could human wisdom or human foresight effect? In the midst of alarms, of suspicions, of discredit, it was impossible to enter upon any new or extraordinary measure for reinstating the wealth and resources of the nation: the minister, therefore, instead

of producing a new and complete system of national finance, embraced that remedy which appeared most adapted to the circumstances; and, amidst a number of difficulties, made choice of that which appeared to be fraught with least danger and inconvenience. The *caisse d'escompte*, though not strictly a national institution, had been a favourite with most of the ministers from the period of its institution; it had occasionally rendered service to the state; and, at the period of which we are now treating, the nation was indebted to it in no less a sum than seventy millions. The idea of a national bank had for some years been extremely popular in France. In compliance, therefore, with the popular voice, and as the only means of furnishing the nation with resources, M. Neckar proposed the establishment of one; and for the basis of this establishment he was desirous of taking an institution to which the public had so many obligations, and wished, in a word, to convert the *caisse d'escompte* into a national bank. In opposition to this plan two obstacles presented themselves: the credit of the *caisse d'escompte* was extremely low; and therefore it was neither easy to force its notes into circulation, nor to protract the period when it should be called upon to convert them into specie. After much discussion in the assembly, it was determined in part to adopt the plan of the minister, to act with justice towards the *caisse d'escompte*, to provide the nation with a temporary supply, and to derive as speedy advantages as might be from the immense landed property of the king and of the clergy. Two decrees to this effect were passed on the 19th of December, the particulars of which it would be tedious to detail: the first gave currency to the notes of the *caisse d'escompte*, stipulating at the same time, that it should furnish the national treasury with eighty millions for the current year, which were to be reimbursed, together with the old debt, by assignats on the *caisse de l'extraordinaire*: and the second created a *caisse de l'extraordinaire*, in which all patriotic donations were to be funded; and which was to take charge of the sale of the national do-

mains, and from these resources to answer ultimately the exigencies of the public.

This plan was no sooner carried into execution, than a profusion of patriotic donations flowed into the assembly. Even foreigners, affected with the same generous enthusiasm, were desirous of participating in the glory of giving liberty to France, and extricating those noble assertors of freedom from the difficulties that beset them. The city of Neufchatel, among others, presented the nation with a quarter of its revenue, which was accepted with gratitude: but a donation of 900,000 livres offered by the republic of Geneva met with a very different reception. The ruling party of that city were considered as usurpers, who by the force of arms had seized the government in 1782, and had retained it in opposition to the rights of the citizens. With a unanimity reputable to their feelings, the assembly refused the donation, declaring, that the representatives of the French nation could not accept of a present from the oppressors of Geneva.

The patriotism and virtue of the assembly were put to a severer trial on the 10th of December. The revolted states of Brabant and Flanders were naturally led to look up to the assertors of Gallic liberty, as protectors and allies. M. Vandernoot, therefore, who assumed the title and character of agent plenipotentiary of Brabant, transmitted to the king and the legislative body the manifesto of those newly created states. The first impulse of the people demanded the immediate recognition of the liberty and independence of the Austrian Netherlands; but the assembly had the courage and the prudence to resist this impulse; and conscious that the state was unprepared for a general continental war, in which such a step must infallibly involve them, and yet unwilling to declare themselves the immediate partisans of despotism, deferred opening the dispatch till a remote period.

The examples of the rebellious parliaments of Metz and Rouen did not deter that of Britany from following their example; with this additional mark of con-

tumacy, that the chamber of vacations there did not satisfy itself with a protest against the authority of the legislature, but positively refused to register the edict which suspended them from the exercise of their functions. On being ordered to the bar of the assembly, they pleaded that the term for the exercise of their power was expired, and therefore they could not perform any legal act; but justified the measure still further by a reference to the old charters and statutes of Britany. The consequence was, that, being a second time ordered to the bar, they were deprived formally of the rights of active citizens, till by a solemn act they should declare their submission; and a temporary chamber was established for the administration of justice in Britany.

The corruption which had pervaded all the old tribunals of justice, indeed, appeared scarcely less to attach to that of the Chatelet than to the provincial administrations. In acquitting the baton Bezenval, marshal Broglio, and the prince de Lambesq, they at once asserted the sacred independance of the laws, and demonstrated their own regard to justice. To condemn the servants of an existing government for obedience to the commands of their superiors, is to punish the guiltless, while the really criminal escape; and to try men for offences against the rights of the people, while the actual constitution of the country has denied them any, is to try them by an *ex post facto* law. But, in the sacrifice of the marquis de Favras, this tribunal forfeited the honour it would otherwise have acquired in the eyes of good men, and enveloped their own proceedings in a veil of mystery unbecoming a free government, and which fixes an indelible stain upon their own characters.

This unfortunate gentleman inherited from nature an enterprising genius, and an exalted ambition. He had been successively a captain of dragoons, and first lieutenant of the Swiss guards in the service of Monsieur. He had married a princess of Anhalt Schaumburg, who had been persecuted by her family on ac-

count of her attachment to the Roman catholic religion; and, by his spirit and address, had obtained an imperial rescript to oblige the prince her father to allow his daughter a pension of one thousand florins. The marquis de Favras engaged deeply in the troubles of Holland in 1785; and having undertaken to raise a regiment for the service of the patriotic party, he formed a connection with a M. Tourcaty, who engaged to furnish him with troops. The peace, however, which was forced upon the Dutch by the military mediation of the king of Prussia, disconcerted his projects, and induced him to turn his attention to the insurrection in Brabant, as a proper field for the display of his talents. His patriotic connections in these countries; however, had not converted him to the democratic side of the question in his own. Connected by birth with the aristocracy, and in habits of intimacy with the great men of the court, he was supposed to have been privy to the plan of carrying off the king to Metz. He was one of the first to wear the white cockade on the 2d of October; and on the 5th he had requested M. de St. Priest to furnish him and a number of volunteers with horses from the royal stables, in order to disperse the rabble, and deprive them of their artillery.

After the establishment of the king and the assembly at Paris, the marquis de Favras was accused of entering into a further conspiracy, the object of which was to engage a number of men, under the pretence of raising a regiment for the service of Brabant, who were to enter Paris by different ways, to massacre M. de la Fayette, M. Bailly, and M. Neckar, and with or without his consent convey the king to Peronne. Monsieur the king's brother, was also suspected of being at the head of this conspiracy. In the course of his proceedings, he renewed his connection with Tourcaty, in order to engage his services in raising men: this person had introduced him to another of the name of Morel. These were his principal agents; and in concert with these men he actually applied to M. Chomel, a moneyed

man in Paris to negotiate a loan in the name of Monsieur.

The news of this supposed conspiracy was no sooner abroad, than the whole city was in a state of confusion. Monsieur flew to the Hôtel de Ville, to explain to the magistrates the nature of his connexion with M. de Favras. He stated that in 1772 that gentleman entered into his Swiss guards, and declined the service in 1775, from which time he had never spoken with him. That finding himself disappointed from the troubles of the nation in the collection of his revenues, and not wishing to apply to the public treasury, he determined to solicit a private loan; that M. de Favras had been recommended as a proper person to negotiate this business, and had actually effected it with Messieurs Chomel and Sertorius, bankers; but that he had never had any personal communication with the marquis de Favras on this affair, or on any other. He appealed, in his justification, to his conduct in the assembly of the notables; and assured the magistrates, that he had ever been a most firm friend to the revolution. The discourse of Monsieur appeared to satisfy both the magistrates and the national assembly, though some of the patriotic writers have still continued to doubt of his innocence.

M. de Favras was arrested on the 26th of December, but was not brought to trial before the 9th of February following. The principal evidences against him were Tourcaty and Morel, who stated the facts, which have been already related, in accusation: and these were corroborated by the testimony of a M. Marquié, who had been a serjeant in the French guards, had distinguished himself in the taking of the Bastille, and was now sub-lieutenant of one of the centre companies. On the 6th of October this person had been extremely active in saving the lives of the gardes-du-corps; and, in conducting the king to Paris, was observed to shed tears. It appeared that the marquis de Favras had had some interviews in private with M. Marquié, in which he attempted to infuse into his mind suspicions that the

French guards were no longer to be entrusted with the honour of guarding their monarch, which was to be committed entirely to the citizens: he insinuated, that they ought to resume their former appellation; and presented him with a pamphlet, the title of which was, "Open your eyes." To all this the marquis replied, in his defence, that considering himself, as he was, without money, without men; with no confidants but two such persons as Tourcaty and Morel, the gross absurdity of projecting such a plot as he was accused of was a sufficient answer to the calumny; and observed, that the evidence of the two first witnesses was so contradictory and inconsistent with each other, that their testimony ought to be considered as of no weight.

A third witness, more formidable than any of the others, was however produced, and this was M. Chomel. He did not pretend that M. Favras had communicated to him any particulars similar to those which were stated by the other witnesses; but asserted, that he had talked with him of a much more feasible project, which was, to assemble all the discontented party on the frontiers of the Netherlands, under a pretence of taking part in that dispute, until they should form an army strong enough to invade France from different quarters; which was to be followed by a reinstatement of the parliaments, and all the different branches of the old government which had been destroyed.

On the first day of the trial of M. De Favras, the mob had endeavoured riotously to assemble; but they were dispersed by the masterly conduct of M. de la Fayette, and the fidelity of the French guards, and long before his condemnation the city was restored to perfect tranquillity.

It is plain that the evidence against this unhappy gentleman was by no means sufficiently decisive to justify a verdict against him. At the most, his crime was little more than conversation, the expression of a wish to overturn the government, without the least probability of success in the execution of it; even this, however, he most strenuously denied. He asserted, that he was

not disaffected to the new order of things, and only wished to see his sovereign enjoy in safety and tranquillity that share of authority which was consistent with a free government; and that, in all the projects he had ever entertained concerning the levying of troops, he had nothing farther in view than to push his fortune in the service of Brabant. He pleaded his cause with all the energy and confidence of conscious innocence, with all the eloquence and argument of a most accomplished mind—in vain. The temper of the people, it was supposed, required a victim, and this corrupt tribunal was determined it should not want one. He was found guilty, and condemned to be executed on the 19th of the same month. If we may credit the report of ocular witnesses, there never was displayed greater vigour of mind, greater force of character, or more exalted courage, than was manifest in the conduct of the unfortunate convict, at a moment the most trying for human nature. From that period till his execution his fortitude never forsook him. On the fatal day he was dressed at an early hour, and with peculiar decency and care. He requested that he might be attended in his last moments by the curate of St. Paul's church, and professed, with a sober but fervent piety, his firm belief in the great truths of the gospel, and his hope of a joyful resurrection. He was drawn in a cart to the place of execution, his head and feet naked, his hair loose and flowing, and dressed, agreeably to the sentence, in a white robe over his own clothes. When arrived before the principal gate of Notre Dame, he desired to be conducted to the Hôtel de Ville, where he would reveal, he said, important secrets. He there dictated, with his usual calmness, a long protestation of his innocence. He declared that neither in July, September, nor October, he had been privy to any conspiracy to carry off the king. His earnestness in the king's service on the 5th of October had pointed him out, he said, to a great lord who was engaged about the king's person, as a proper man to observe the motions of the populace. This great person (probably

the prince de Luxembourg) was, at that time, apprehensive of an insurrection in the suburb of St. Antoine; he therefore employed M. de Favras to procure intelligence, in order that, in such a case, measures might be taken for the king's safety, and presented him with one hundred louis to discharge his expences in this enquiry. On this account, and on this only, he declared, he had applied to Tourcaty and Morel, and had sounded M. Marquié with respect to the sentiments of the French guards. It is said moreover, but on what authority we cannot ascertain, that he asked the judge who attended him on the occasion, "whether, if he were to explain himself more openly, it would make any alteration in his favour?" and that, upon the judge assuring him that it was impossible to defer the execution of the sentence, he replied, "In that case, my secret shall die with me."

At eight o'clock in the evening M. de Favras descended from the Hôtel de Ville, and proceeded to the place of execution (surrounded with lamps and torches) with a firm step, and with the utmost composure exhorted his friends not to lament his fate. The whole of the ferocious multitude, who waited for and rejoiced in his death, was moved. The curate of St. Paul fainted. When at the foot of the scaffold, the marquis exclaimed, "Citizens, I die an innocent man. Pray for me." The whole assembly trembled; the executioner himself was overwhelmed with emotions of grief; the most awful silence ensued for some minutes, and was only broken by the intrepid sufferer himself calling out to the executioner to do his duty. After hanging the usual time, his body was delivered to his friends.

Such was the fate of this unfortunate nobleman;—unmerited, certainly, if we are to judge only from the evidence which is before the public; and if among his papers, which were seized, any more convincing testimonies were found, they ought to have been fairly exhibited to the world, whatever the rank of the persons whom they might involve. Either the public ought to have been satisfied of the guilt of M. de Favras, or he

ought to have been acquitted. What is most extraordinary is, that about the same period a M. Augeard was accused before the same tribunal of a similar crime; and a project in his own hand writing for carrying off the king to Metz was produced, which project he had himself communicated to M. de Clermont Tonnerre; and yet, difficult as it may be to reconcile such contradictions, this man was solemnly acquitted, while the elegant and accomplished Favras was condemned and executed.

While the Chatelet was thus ignominiously employed, the national assembly was proceeding in its patriotic labours. Several decrees which reflect honour on their liberality of sentiment were passed. Among these we shall only mention the decree which declares all persons, whether professing the catholic religion or not, eligible to all offices and employments of the state; and that which abolished the barbarous feudal principle, which attached infamy to the descendants of persons executed for crimes, and which, with us, is still retained under the unphilosophical term, *corruption of blood*. On the 4th of February the king voluntarily repaired to the national assembly; and lamenting, in a long discourse, the malignant efforts of the enemies of the new constitution, he declared solemnly, that he would defend it to the last moment of his existence; and that, in concert with the queen, it should be his constant endeavour to educate his children in the sacred love of liberty. The applause which was bestowed on this discourse was mingled with tears of joy and gratitude. As soon as the king was retired, the assembly decreed a most loyal address; and profiting by the occasion, it was also determined to administer immediately to all the members present the civic oath, and it was enacted that those who were absent should not be permitted to take any part in the deliberations till they had submitted to a similar ceremony. The example was followed by the whole city of Paris; and at the same time an address to the provinces was decreed by the assembly, to announce what they had already effected.

ed, and what they still proposed to do for the entire regeneration of the empire.

The disorders of the kingdom had not yet subsided. At Besiers a riot was occasioned by the seizure of some contraband salt; and five persons were hanged by the mob. The castles of the nobility in many parts of the kingdom were pillaged; nor did those of the most decided patriots escape. That of M. Charles Lameth was plundered; and that of the duke d'Aiguillon was threatened, but was saved by the activity of the national guard. As the only remedy, therefore, to these disgraceful proceedings, the assembly was obliged, in addition to the riot act formerly mentioned, to pass a decree, which made the municipality responsible for whatever damages might ensue from riotous assemblies of the people in any part of the kingdom.

The continuance of these acts of violence furnished the parliament of Bourdeaux with a pretext for exciting the country against the new constitution: and a kind of report was drawn up by the chamber of vacations there, of the grievances which the new arrangements had brought upon the country. As soon as this matter was known to the national assembly, it was agitated with much violence for some days; but they at length dismissed the magistrates of the parliament with a gentle reproof.

If the gentlemen of the robe contended with their usual chicanery and address, the opposition of the clergy was not less violent. It must indeed be confessed, that the property which the latter had at stake was much more considerable than that of the former; and their claim to that property was much stronger than that which the legal profession advanced in favour of their monopoly of justice. These clamours were increased by the apprehension that the church lands were speedily to be put to sale; and as a preparatory step, the abolition of monastic vows and orders was agitated in the assembly. After a clamorous debate upon this subject, which in its own nature scarcely admitted of any, it was decreed, "that in future the assembly would sanction

no monastic vows in persons of either sex: that the monastic orders were from that moment suppressed in France: that every individual confined in monasteries, of either sex, might be immediately released from their monastic obligations, by giving in their declaration to the municipality, and that such should be entitled to a certain pension; but that houses should be provided for the reception and support of such as should not be disposed to take advantage of this decree.

During the discussion of this topic in the assembly a voice was heard, requiring that a decree should be passed, solemnly declaring that the Roman catholic religion was the established religion of the state; and this was followed by a violent clamour, that the church was in danger. M. Dupont replied, that there could not be a doubt that the Roman catholic religion was the religion of the state, since they had appropriated more than 80,000,000 (or four millions sterling) annually to its support. To put an entire termination, however, to all similar debates, the assembly decreed, "that the attachment of the nation to the Roman catholic religion ought not to be doubted, since the support of that form of worship held the first rank in the public expences."

These proceedings were speedily followed by a decree, authorizing the sale of the church lands to the amount of eighty millions of livres; to be disposed of from time to time as the legislature should direct. In the mean time it was determined, that a number of assignats, or notes of credit upon these lands, to be accepted in payment on their sale, should be issued into circulation. Some regulations were also made respecting the ransom of the feudal rights, and the temporary administration of the tithes.

Several other financial arrangements were adopted for the ease and convenience of the people, and for the encouragement of commerce. The taxes upon leather, oil, soap, starch, and iron, were all abolished. But the most popular step of the legislature was to annihilate for ever the odious and oppressive *droit de ga-*

belle, or salt-tax, which had for ages been the cause of continual seditions among the people. These were replaced by a small addition to the territorial taxes. The tax on tobacco has since been abolished; and from that period tobacco and salt have become, what they were not before, considerable articles of commerce in France. In fine, that no unlawful restriction should remain upon commerce, the trade to the East Indies was declared free and open to the whole nation.

In the mean time the assembly was not inattentive to that great and necessary task, the reform of the jurisprudence. In almost every nation of Europe the laws are founded upon an equivocal basis; the structure is heterogeneous and inconsistent, and the practice consequently difficult, expensive, and uncertain. They are either founded upon the voluminous code of the Roman law, or they are derived from feudal principles, which are now obsolete and barbarous. Thus the sources of European jurisprudence have no connection or analogy with the manners or spirit of the times; and the practice of the courts is necessarily sometimes in contradiction to the principles of the feudal laws, and at others absurdly directed by them. The precedents which are founded upon these uncertain and obsolete principles are too voluminous to be useful, too contradictory to be just. The laws themselves, instead of being simple, and obvious to the capacities of the people, are more deeply involved in mystery than the most abstruse speculations of school divinity: they are studied, not to be understood, but to be disputed; and the people are governed by a collection of maxims of which they know as little as of the code of China or Indostan. In no country was this the case more than in France, and in scarcely any were the expences of law-suits more grievously oppressive. The assembly at once simplified the laws; and placed justice within the reach of the poor, by ordering that it should be *gratuitously administered*. It restored the excellent institution of juries in criminal cases; though, for what reason it would be difficult to devise, they omitted to extend that

institution to civil causes, where it is still more essential to an uncorrupt administration of justice.

The abolition of the feudal tenures affected materially the revenues of some of the princes of Germany who had possessions in France: to these the French legislature decreed a compensation; but the prejudices or the policy of those noblemen did not permit them to accept of any.

In the regulation of their own West India colonies a still more difficult task was imposed upon the national assembly; and as these affairs have been much spoken of, but not generally understood, we shall endeavour to state them as authentically as we can, and as copiously as our limits will admit. When the national assembly first proclaimed the rights of men and citizens, the sugar islands trembled, in the apprehension that the two most cruel outrages against humanity, slavery and the slave trade, were about to be abolished. The enlightened policy of the united states of America had set the example; and a considerable majority of the people of Great Britain demanded the abolition of the slave trade with a peremptory voice. The most unjust suspicions had pervaded the islands of the intentions of the negroes; which united to the distrust in which the planters held the views of the assembly, contributed to produce a general ferment in the minds of the white inhabitants.

St. Domingo above all was destined to be the fatal theatre of commotion and of bloodshed. This island is divided into three provinces, the north, the south, and the west; but these are united under one governor general, and one intendant. It appears that so early as the month of June 1789, the deputies from this island negotiated with the minister of marine concerning the new form of government which was intended for the colony. It was, however, the 27th of September before any thing decisive was determined; and then the minister of marine addressed to the governor and intendant an order to convoke the inhabitants for the

purpose of forming a legislative assembly for interior regulation, &c.

The minister's letter arrived too late in the island; three committees were already formed for the three provinces; those of the south and west still preserved a communication with the administration, and with the metropolis; but that of the north, which was assembled at the Cape, manifested very different principles. It declared that the full power of the northern province was legally vested in itself, and that any other assembly would be seditious, and would rather obstruct than promote the re-establishment of order. It presumed to control the executive government; it continued in their functions *for a time* the public officers; but it nevertheless intercepted the ministerial dispatches, made some alteration in the taxes, and in the administration of justice; it even imprisoned M. Dubois, deputy procureur-general, for having said that the slavery of the negroes was an infraction of general liberty. The necessary consequence was a contest between the committee and the executive power. M. Peynier, the governor, annulled by a decree of the supreme council all the resolutions of the committee; forbade the imprisonment of M. Dubois, and ordered an account of all these facts to be transmitted to the national assembly. On the other hand, the decree of the governor and council was declared invalid by the rebellious assembly, who chose a commander in chief of their militia, and were proceeding to hostile measures; but the prudence and moderation of M. de Peynier for a while at least repressed their violence.

The free people of colour (so all the shades between black and white are termed), who formed a considerable part of the population, and possessed a great share of the property of the island, conducted themselves in a very different manner. The unjust arrogance of the whites had placed them in a state of degradation, and insulted with opprobrium every person who bore the smallest relation to the despised African race. As the abolition of all absurd and oppressive prejudices was one

of the first principles sanctioned by the French revolution, these depreciated persons were induced to hope that the day was at hand, when a barbarous prejudice, which branded them with the seal of infamy, should no longer exist. In the course of November 1789, the people of colour were assembled in the different parishes for the purpose of advancing a modest claim to the common rights of citizens, and on the 19th they presented an humble memorial to the assembly adapted to that purpose. Such an act of insolence, as it was termed, irritated at once the offended pride of the whites; they caused the deputies to be arrested, and threatened to hang them on the spot, if they refused to disclose the name of the person who drew up their address. It proved to be a M. Ferrand, a procureur of the king. He was therefore immediately sent for and interrogated. He declared, with a becoming firmness, that he was the author of the paper which they termed seditious, and proclaimed himself the defender of the cause. Without further ceremony or process, they ordered his head to be struck off by the common executioner, and the sentence was instantly performed.

The outrages and persecution which were commenced upon the people of colour immediately after this transaction knew no bounds. On the nights of the 26th and 27th of November the whites of the committee of Aquin, in three bands, fell upon their habitations, under the pretence of searching for treasonable correspondence. Among others, these ruffians repaired to the house of a M. Labadie. This respectable old gentleman was at that moment reposing quietly in his bed. They burst open his door, and informed him, without further preface, that they were come for his head. Five and-twenty muskets were instantly fired at him, and his young child was murdered at his side. Though desperately wounded, he had still strength enough left to defend himself; and as they knew he had one hundred and fifty negroes by whom he was adored, and whom a single call would have brought upon them, they consented to a kind of compromise,

that they would spare his life for the present, if he would make no resistance, but go along with them and submit to a trial. He was immediately, without dressing his wounds, put to the bar ; and after a mock examination his head was about to be taken off, had he not been rescued from the executioner by the intrepidity of a person of the name of Maigret, who came to his assistance at the head of a small party.

With a patience and magnanimity highly honourable to the people of colour, they transmitted an account of these proceedings to the national assembly, and declared that, whatever might be the result of their petition, they would submit to its decision. Such was not the language of the white colonists, of their deputies, and of the merchants who traded with them. They represented all the proceedings of the other party as insolent and treasonable, and denounced no less than destruction on the colony, should any resolution in favour of the black inhabitants be passed by the legislature.

In this dilemma, the committee appointed by the national assembly for regulating the affairs of the colonies took the unfortunate determination to temporize, and not to effect any thing of a definitive nature. By their recommendation a decree was passed, which "authorized the inhabitants of every colony to make known their sentiments to the assembly, concerning that plan of interior legislation which would be most conducive to their prosperity ; which sanctioned the illegal assemblies already elected, and recommended in places where there were none the speedy election of similar bodies. To the decree was annexed a declaration, that the assembly would not innovate directly or indirectly any system of commerce, with which the welfare of the colonies was connected : " which declaration was generally understood as a sanction of the African slave trade.

This decree, which was passed on the 8th of March 1790, was certainly well intended, but it was as certainly a most injudicious measure. The assembly had not the daring inhumanity to decree decisively the sub-

jugation of the free people of colour; but it had not the courage to do them justice, to restore them to the common rights of citizens, and annihilate a senseless prejudice founded solely on a difference of complexion. By leaving the adjustment of the government to the colonists themselves, they might be said to have passed an act subversive at once of all order, and declaratory of civil war; and unfortunately the preliminary article to this adjustment was undefined, for they had left undetermined the description or class of men who were to accomplish the very object of the decree. Hence, and hence only, have originated those dreadful contests and insurrections which have desolated the island of St. Domingo; consequences which the sagacity and penetration of Mirabeau anticipated, and would have averted. He and M. Cazalés both ascended the tribune to deprecate the passing of the decree; but such was the influence of the colonists in the assembly, that they were not heard.

We have already intimated, that a committee was appointed for the purpose of inquiring into the expenditure of the public money in pensions and donations; and it was found that a register was kept by the ministers, under the name of the *red book*, in which every pension or gift was entered in the hand writing of the comptroller-general of the finances, and checked by the king himself. At the pressing instance of the committee, this book was communicated to them on the 15th of March. The communication was made under strong circumstances of reserve and delicacy. The king entreated that the profuse expences of his grandfather might be kept from the public eye; and the committee promised M. Neckar, it is said, that no part of it should be divulged, which might in any respect hurt the feelings of his majesty. The possession of such a depository was however too important an advantage in the hands of the popular party not to be employed; it was, therefore, not without surprise and indignation that M. Neckar saw this register in a few days committed to the press; and when he demanded why they had

presumed to publish it without the permission of the assembly and the king, he received for answer, "That as to the assembly, they were certain of its approbation; and as to the king, they were not his representatives." Of this proceeding we can only observe, that it would not have been easy for the committee to reconcile the suppression of this catalogue of public depredations with their duty to their constituents; but certainly the publication ought to have been conducted in a manner more honourable to the representatives of a great nation.

The publication of the red book disclosed a series of extravagance and iniquity perhaps unparalleled. Such was the profusion of one minister alone, M. Calonne, that under his short administration it appeared that, independent of their immense revenues, the two brothers of the king had committed depredations on the public treasury to the amount of nearly *two millions* sterling; that upwards of 1,100,000*l.* of this had fallen to the share of the count d'Artois; and that the same minister had undertaken moreover to discharge the debts of this prince, amounting to nearly one million sterling besides. Among the donations and benefactions also, some appeared of the most singular description: among others was recorded a present of 600,000 *l.* to an individual for his *important services*; and these services so important to the state were, that he was *maître d'hôtel* to his own wife, madame de Polignac!

The disagreement which took place, upon the publication of the red book, between the minister of finance and M. Camus and the other members of the committee of pensions, contributed greatly to the destruction of M. Neckar's popularity, which was already on the decline. Another objection which was raised against him by his enemies related to his plan of creating a board of treasury, which should have a constant control, and which should be continually occupied in apportioning the expences of the state; but the only circumstance which it appears they were able to insist upon in opposition to this plan of the minister was, that his board

was chiefly selected from the members of the national assembly, and they had already decreed that none of their members could accept of appointments under the executive government. Another more reasonable cause, which accelerated the unpopularity of this great and upright minister, was, that he had not been forward to promote the creation and circulation of assignats, though it certainly appeared the only measure which was likely to restore the finances, and retrieve the credit of the nation.

M. Neckar was not the only one of the king's ministers who fell under the displeasure of the people. The count de St. Priest was suspected (and that was sufficient in France) of treasonable designs. A M. Bonne Savardin, who was connected with M. Maillebois, had engaged in carrying on a negotiation between that general and the ex-princes, to effect a counter-revolution. Upon an information, however, given to the committee of research by M. Maffot de Grand-maison, secretary to M. Maillebois, the whole scheme was detected. The general himself fled; but M. Bonne Savardin was seized, and among his papers were found minutes of a conversation between him and M. St. Priest, which indicated, it was said, some disaffection in that minister. The other members of administration were scarcely more popular; and but little confidence was reposed in the patriotism of either M. de la Tour du Pin, or the archbishop of Bourdeaux.

Suspicion and discontent were not indeed confined to the metropolis, but seemed at this unhappy period to pervade the whole kingdom. At Lyons a corps of volunteers was instituted, who refused to mix with the city militia; and but for the judicious conduct of the Swiss regiment d'Ambert, which was quartered there, the whole city might have become the theatre of the most shocking barbarity. At Toulon, a formidable insurrection took place among the workmen in the arsenal, under the pretence of demanding the liberty of three sailors who were confined for some offence, and it was with difficulty quelled by the national guard.

At Marseilles two regiments of infantry and two hundred dragoons were stationed under the command of M. d'Ambers, colonel of one of the regiments. This officer is accused of having grossly insulted the national guard. Be this as it may, his conduct proved in some way offensive to the patriotism or the prejudices of the municipality and the citizens. An order was obtained from the king for the removal of the regiments; but as the commanders appeared rather tardy in the execution of this order, a troop of young men, to the number of thirty, concerted a stratagem for the purpose of seizing forcibly the fortrefs, and expelling the garrison, which they successfully effected on the night of the 29th of April. The fortrefs, with those of St. Nicholas and St. John, were demolished: on the latter of these forts human nature had been for almost a century insulted by a Latin inscription: "This tower was erected by Louis XIV. lest his faithful people of Marseilles should become infatuated with the love of liberty."

In a similar insurrection at Valence, the viscount de Voisin was torn by the populace from the hands of the national guard, and murdered. In his pocket the traces of a treasonable correspondence were said to be found; though such evidence, we must confess, ought always to be regarded with suspicion, since, if there is a design to take away the life or character of any man, nothing is more easy than to forge a letter.

On the other hand, the enemies of the revolution were not less forward than their adversaries in exciting disturbances and insurrections. Religion was a pretext which was eagerly seized by the disaffected, and the fanaticism of the multitude was but too successfully wrought on. In the metropolis, the populace took but little interest in the fate of the church; and though the clergy had assembled in the church of the Capuchins, St. Honoré, to protest against the sale of the lands, and the proceedings of the national assembly, their declaration, like all impotent menaces, produced only a smile of contempt. In the course of this proceeding, they

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reproached the assembly for not having formally declared a national religion: "Why," said Mirabeau, "have they not reproached us for neglecting to declare that the sun is the star of the nation, and that no other shall be acknowledged or permitted to regulate the succession of day and night?"

In the provinces, the efforts of the refractory clergy were more successful. In the south particularly, which had been the theatre of religious war, and where the two parties of catholic and protestant still regarded each other with a due degree of theological animosity, the consequences were truly serious. At Toulouse, the pious season, when they celebrated the massacre of the Albigenes was chosen for the circulation of an inflammatory address. On the 18th of April a large assembly of fanatics was collected in the hall of the Great Augustins: hence they adjourned under the command of a M. du Barry to the Seneschassée, where the apostle of this crusade, as a master-piece of policy, contrived somewhere to conceal the bust of the king. Some young men of the national guard, however, happening to discover it, fortunately contrived to turn the plot against its author: for immediately on discovering the bust, they drew their sabres, and shouting *Vive le roi!* they forced their officers, and many others who were suspected of ill designs, to take the civic oath. The municipality soon after appeared; and having quelled the tumult, they strictly forbade the renewal of these treasonable assemblies.

What was only a feeble and abortive attempt at Toulouse was at Montaubon a most alarming commotion. The protestants of that place amounted to about one-sixth of the population. They lived in perfect harmony with the catholics, and composed in conjunction with them the national guard, a body of men devoted to the new constitution and to the service of their country. As it was found impracticable to disseminate the principles of distrust or disunion through this body, a plan was concerted by the aristocratic party to raise up another military force in opposition to it, and a corps

of volunteers was instituted. In establishing the municipality also, the same party had taken care to fill the vacant offices with their creatures; and one of the first acts of these magistrates was to demand from the commander of the national guard the keys of the arsenal where the arms were deposited. The requisition was peaceably complied with, and it proved the first effect of a fatal conspiracy. After some other proceedings which indicated a settled system of hostility, about the beginning of April meetings were held in the churches, for the avowed purpose of petitioning the assembly to preserve the episcopal chair of Montaubon, and the religious houses; while no means were omitted in these meetings at the same time to inflame the populace against the national guard, as a body chiefly composed of infidels and heretics. In opposition to these hostile steps, the patriotic soldiers adopted in their own defence only the peaceable measure of transmitting to the national assembly an account of these proceedings, and at the same time of endeavouring to prevent the creation of new companies of volunteers, by a declaration that they were ready to enrol in the old companies every citizen who manifested a disposition to serve his country. While affairs remained in this state, the municipality appointed the 10th of May for visiting the five religious communities, and making the inventory of their effects, agreeably to the decree of the 26th of March. The commissioners were no sooner named to proceed upon this duty, than they found themselves interrupted by a riotous mob composed chiefly of women: soon after a similar assemblage was collected opposite the house of the commandant general, and another at the Cordeliers, breathing indignation and destruction against the heretics. The municipality was then sitting, and the patriots earnestly besought them to permit the national guard to arm for the relief of the city. The company of dragoons, which was chiefly composed of protestants, were particularly obnoxious to the mob, who exclaimed that it was now time to sacrifice these heretics. Instead of permitting them to

arm in their own defence, the perfidious magistrates ordered the dragoons to retire. To retire was now become impossible without the imminent risk of their lives. In this desperate extremity they took the resolution of throwing themselves into the corps-du-garde, where with a few bad arms they hoped to make some stand against the fury of the populace. Unfortunately they were without ammunition, and the mob directed a desperate and continued fire against the windows of the corps-du-garde. It was in vain that the besieged hung out a white handkerchief as entreating clemency. In the very act of submission five of the dragoons were killed, and the mob immediately began to pull down the walls. Happily the regiment of Languedoc was stationed not far distant, and in this dangerous crisis arrived time enough to save the lives of the remaining dragoons. The regiment was just strong enough to protect them, as they were conducted, covered with blood and wounds, from the scene of their sufferings to the common prison, where the enraged multitude still continued assembled, most brutally asking for their heads, and exclaiming, "Down with the nation!"

The news of these intolerant proceedings no sooner reached Bourdeaux, than a patriotic army was detached for the purpose of avenging the cruel outrages committed on their fellow soldiers, and restoring the tranquillity of Montaubon. From Toulouse a similar expedition proceeded. The regiment of Languedoc refused to act against these patriotic armies, though urged by its commanding officer, who was in the aristocratic interest. Fortunately M. Dumas, the commissary of the king, arrived in time to prevent a contest which would probably have terminated in a dreadful carnage. At his instance the detachment of Bourdeaux retired without entering the city, and the prisoners were honourably released, and carried in triumph to Bourdeaux.

The same indecent scenes which had been rehearsed at Toulouse and performed at Montaubon, were repeated at Nîmes. The population of that city amounted

to about fifty thousand souls, the quarter part of whom were protestants. No religious distinction was observed in forming the national guard, nor was it till after many efforts that the spirit of fanaticism could be excited in the inhabitants. When the municipality, however, came to be elected, the priests and monks were assiduous in engaging the citizens by oath not to give their vote to any protestant. By a similar course of intrigue and faction, M. Marguerites, one of the noble and protesting members of the assembly, was elected mayor; and his installation was marked by a proceeding which was a proper omen of what was to follow. At Nimes a number of pikes or halberds had been manufactured for the purpose of arming the catholic party; and at the ceremony of his installation, several persons of the militia appeared armed with these weapons, contrary to the express order of the commandant of the national guard.

The following day, one of the serjeants who had in this manner transgressed the orders of his commanding officer, was reproached with his disobedience. He replied, that he was authorised by the mayor. A protestant serjeant who happened to be present obliged the other to follow him to that magistrate, who denied the fact, and ordered the catholic serjeant to be imprisoned for *half an hour*. Such a sentence was considered rather as a triumph than as a punishment; and he was no sooner released, than with an immense troop of desperadoes he repaired to the house of the protestant serjeant, who was fortunate enough to escape by a back way. The alarm soon spread in almost every quarter; the protestants were every where attacked, and several of them grievously wounded.

The city continued in a state of ferment, owing to the desire of the magistrates to disarm gradually the national guard, and insisting on their taking, besides the usual civic oath, a particular oath of obedience and submission to themselves. On the 21st of April twenty companies were assembled for this purpose, when the general cry was, "Long live the king, down with the nation,

cut the throats of the blacks!" so they termed the protestants. In a few days afterwards an incendiary libel was distributed among the regiment of Guyenne, entitled, "Important advice to the French army;" the anti-patriots in general, and even some companies of the military, put on the white cockade, the signal of rebellion; several tumults were excited by contests between the different parties; and on the 4th of May the devastation and carnage would have been universal, had not the regiment of Guyenne insisted on the mayor proclaiming the martial law, which once more restored tranquillity and order.

M. Marguerites was cited before the national assembly to answer for these disorders; but his defence was ingenious, and the tenderness of his colleagues for a member of their own body prevented the infliction of punishment. On the 4th of June the discontents and disorders were renewed before the gate of the palace, where the electoral body were assembled. The rebellious companies who had worn the white cockade would forcibly prevent the dragoons and the regiment of Guyenne from forming the patrols, and doing the regular duty of the city. They openly attacked the unarmed dragoons, fired on the citizens from the windows, and intrenched themselves in a tower adjacent to the house, of M. Froment. After some attempts at a parley, which it is said were broken by the firing of the aristocrats, the regiment of Guyenne forced the tower; and on both sides about twenty-four persons were killed.

Innumerable jealousies took place between the officers and soldiers of the different regiments; and in one of these contests the viscount de Mirabeau ran off with the colours of his regiment, but was pursued, and obliged to surrender them. In the capital the same causes operated to promote disunion and distrust; and this, united to the hasty and impetuous spirit of the French nation, was frequently on the point of betraying them into the most desperate excesses. An instance of this kind occurred on the 19th of May, which is worthy of being recorded. On that day an unfortunate man was

detected in the act of stealing a sack of oats. Some soldiers of the national guard took him immediately under their protection, and were conveying him as a prisoner to the Chatelet; but the populace, who were in the habit of inflicting summary justice, tore him from the soldiers, and were in the act of beating him to death with their clubs, when the marquis de la Fayette happened to pass by the horrible scene. He plunged instantly into the thickest of the mob, and in despite of their outcries and menaces seized the person who had begun the tumult, and conducted him with his own hands to the Chatelet. He next delivered the unfortunate criminal from the mob; and, exhorting them to disperse, and conduct themselves like orderly citizens, had the happiness to see the tumult entirely suppressed, and the people return to their houses, full of the praises of the man who had so intrepidly rescued them from their own phrenzy, and prevented them from contaminating themselves with human blood.

An unexpected event, which occurred about the middle of May, excited the attention of the national assembly to one of the most important questions that can agitate a political society. The dispute which took place between Great Britain and Spain, concerning Nootka Sound, became extremely embarrassing to the politics of France. The strict alliance which for almost a century had subsisted between the nations of France and Spain, strengthened by the once inviolable bond of family connexion between the respective courts, rendered it probable that a demand would be made by the latter for the stipulated assistance: on the other hand, a war might be fatal to the nascent liberties of France; and the love of freedom which dignifies the British nation rendered her an object of veneration with the French patriots. On the 14th of May, M. de Montmorin communicated to the national assembly the preparations for war in which the neighbouring powers were engaged, and the precautions which the king had thought necessary to adopt for the preservation of his dominions. The discussions into which this communi-

cation led were as various as the alarms which it excited : the lesser objects were, however, all at length absorbed by one important question—"To whose hands ought the nation to delegate the right of making war and peace?"

Two opposite opinions for a considerable period divided the assembly. The count Clermont Tonnerre, Messrs. de Serent, Virieu, Dupont and others, defended warmly the concession of this prerogative to the king.—They stated, that the constitution originally established two distinct powers, the legislative and the executive. The one was intended solely to express the public will ; the other to execute it.—That under the latter of these predicaments fell the right of directing the public force, for the defence or for the advantage of the nation.—That general principles and general laws are the objects of legislation ; but that the detail of political action fell entirely within the province of executive government. The proceedings of popular assemblies, they added, are necessarily too slow and too public in a business where secrecy and dispatch are commonly required. Ministers too are responsible to the nation for their conduct ; but to the members of the national assembly no responsibility whatever is attached : and if ministers are found to be not free from corruption, experience equally evinces that the members of the legislative bodies are not less exposed to temptation. England, so remarkable for its jealousy with respect to its liberties, has delegated to its monarchs this formidable prerogative, and has only thought it necessary to guard against abuses by the authority which the legislature retains over the treasures of the nation. If, in fine, said these advocates of regal power, we have reason to dread the folly or the depravity of a monarch, is there no reason to apprehend those rapid movements of popular enthusiasm, that false and national pride, that unfounded and hasty resentment, which so frequently agitate mixed and numerous assemblies ?

Among the orators who appeared on the contrary side of the question, were Messrs. d'Aiguillon, Garat,

jun. Fréteau, Jellet, Charles Lameth, Sillery, Petion, Robespierre, &c.—In wishing to confine to the legislative body the right of making peace or war, they urged, that the only proper judges of the expediency of war were those who were to feel its inconveniencies; and not those who were far removed from all experience of its evils—That the entering into a war could not be considered as a mere function of executive government, which consists only in putting the existing laws in execution—and that the secrecy and dispatch for which the partisans of the royal prerogative so strongly pleaded, were indeed essential to the conduct of military operations, but could scarcely be necessary to the act of declaring war. They proved from history, that the ruin of most nations had been effected by the false glory of their rulers. They ridiculed the imaginary control that a legislature might be thought to possess, after the commencement of hostilities, by withholding supplies; since the safety, the existence of a state was committed by the declaration of war—and to say we will withhold supplies, is to say *we will not defend ourselves*.—They doubted the efficiency of that responsibility which was attributed to ministers; and demonstrated that there was no responsibility for incapacity, for mistaken opinions, for erroneous speculations; and that even corruption and intrigue might not unfrequently shelter themselves under some of these pretences. These arguments were enforced by a resolution, proposed by M. Petion—"that the French nation renounced for ever all idea of conquest, and confined itself entirely to defensive war;" which was passed with universal acclamations.

From this collision of sentiment a third opinion arose, which, while it contradicted in some measure, served at the same time to conciliate the others; and this was, that to the king should be confided the prerogative of announcing to the assembly the necessity of war or peace, and after a solemn deliberation, it should be declared, "on the part of the king of the French in the name of the nation." This was nearly the opinion which was

supported by the count de Mirabeau ; and though much obloquy was thrown upon him while the affair continued under deliberation, which was to the 22d of May, it was at length victorious.

On the 11th of June the assembly went into mourning for three days on account of the death of Dr. Franklin ; and nearly about the same period the expences of the civil list were settled at twenty-five millions per annum, or about 1,250,000 l. sterling ; and the dowry of the queen at four millions, or 200,000 l. per annum sterling. The civil list of France included---1st, the king's personal expences, and those of the queen ; the education of the royal children, and a provision for the other branches of the royal family : 2d, the buildings ; the *garde meuble*, &c. of the crown : 3d, the royal military establishment, viz. the body guards, &c. However liberal this allowance may at first sight appear, if we recollect the immense domains which the reigning family brought to the nation, it will perhaps not appear enormous : beside that, whatever the parsimonious spirit of republicanism may allege, it is always sound policy to attach by the strongest interests the head of the state to the support of the constitution. A million a year is too little to bribe so numerous a representation, biennially elected, as that of France ; and yet it is such as would enable the monarch to live in a state becoming the chief magistrate of a great nation.

These measures were followed on the 14th and the succeeding days by a series of decrees relative to the civil constitution of the clergy. In these, the injustice which we must confess had been done to that body of men was in some degree compensated, by the wise regulations which prevented the extreme poverty of the inferior orders, and which restrained within moderate bounds the income of the higher clergy. But whether they acted wisely in establishing an elective priesthood, or whether the improved mode of election which was adopted in France would have been preventive of those evils to which such an institution is liable, where the

old forms of election are preserved, are experiments which are yet to be tried.

The assembly had scarcely completed this arduous task, before it ventured upon a measure which drew immediately upon them the censure and indignation of all Europe—a measure, which was the first to awake that malignant jealousy with which the privileged orders and their dependants in every civilized country have since continued to view the French revolution. Early in the month of June, the mayor of Paris had communicated to the assembly a plan for the celebration of a grand confederation, in which the representatives of the nation, the king, the soldiery, and all who were in ostensible situations, should solemnly and in the face of the whole nation renew their oaths of fidelity to the new constitution; and this confederation was decreed to take place on the 14th of July, in honour of the taking of the Bastille, and of the first establishment of Gallic liberty. On the 19th of June, therefore, after decreeing civic honours to the conquerors of the Bastille, the patriotic feelings of the assembly were raised to a high pitch of enthusiasm, by a deputation of foreigners from every nation, who came to testify their respect for the new constitution in a warm panegyric, and to request a seat at the ensuing solemnity. They were answered by the president with dignity, and dismissed with respect; and they had no sooner retired, than M. Alexander Lameth moved that the foreigners, and particularly the Germans, who might resort to Paris to be spectators of the approaching ceremony, might not be insulted by the representation of their ancestors, whom the vanity of Louis XIV. had caused to be exhibited in chains at the feet of his statue. The deputies of some of the provinces, which were represented in this ignominious situation, rose with indignation to demand that these monuments of regal insolence should be effaced; and another member proposed, that all the false and panegyric emblems which decorated the statues of the kings.

should be removed, and replaced by a representation of the *best* action of each of the monarchs.

At this moment M. Lambel, a distinguished advocate and deputy for Villefranche, taking advantage of the general enthusiasm, exclaimed, that "he trusted he now saw the last moment of expiring vanity," and proposed the abolition of titles. Messrs. Prefelne and La Fayette mounted the tribune at the same instant; and the former read the outlines of a decree to that effect, which he said he had prepared two months before. M. Foucault opposed the motion—"What," said he, "would you deprive man of the most powerful and the most noble motive of emulation?—What would you do, for instance, with the man whom Henry II. honoured with a brevet, which recited "that he was created a count for having saved the state?"—"I would omit," said M. la Fayette, "the words *created a count*, and insert only "that he had saved the state." M. de St. Fargeau observed, that the decree in question would not impose any hardship upon him, since he was possessed of several *counties* and *marquisates*, the titles of which he had never employed. Many other members distinguished themselves in this debate, but none more than the viscount de Noailles. "Titles," said this nobleman, "in this enlightened age can only confer honour where there is nothing internally to respect. We do not speak of duke Fox, count Washington, the marquis Franklin, but of Charles Fox, George Washington, Benjamin Franklin. Permit me to add," said he, "to so many excellent motions, one, the object of which is to rescue from disgrace a part of our fellow-citizens. Liveries, as a portion of the feudal system, ought to be abolished." To these motions was added another from M. de Montmorency, for the suppression of armorial bearings; and the whole of them was moulded into a decree by M. Chapelier, and passed.

These decrees, which have been so much extolled by one party, and so much decried by the other, were in themselves really deserving neither of much censure

nor of much praise; they were neither a subject of exultation for France, nor of imitation for other countries differently situated. The inconsistency of mankind is never so decisively evinced as when vanity is the ruling passion. The princes and the nobility of Europe had beheld with indifference, the plunder of the Gallican church; they had seen, without alarm, the virtual annihilation of nobility by the union of the three estates in one house, and by the suppression of the feudal privileges:—but when the unmeaning titles, titles without function, titles without privilege, titles often without property, mostly without legal claim, and frequently debased and degraded, came to be suppressed, then, and not till then, the storm of noble and of regal indignation was at once excited, and the alarm-bell was sounded against the evils of French innovation. In this country in particular, no comparison can be instituted but with an invidious design between the British house of peers and the noblesse of France. No resemblance exists between them, nor is there either any thing to be feared or to be desired from the example. In France the noblesse amounted to upwards of 200,000 persons; in England to not more than 300. In France the whole race was ennobled; in England only the eldest son, and the rest of the family is returned to the mass of private citizens. In England nobility is rather title attached to a certain function: in France it was privilege attached to a title. The house of peers of Great Britain is a member of the state, a legislature and a supreme court of justice; in France nobility was something without designation, without function, without respectability. There the nobility formed a peculiar cast or tribe which disdained to mix with the rest of the nation; in England there is scarcely a family which is not, or has not been, in some manner allied to the nobility, and all are equal except the actual representatives of noble families. In France the offices and emoluments of the state were monopolized by the noblesse; in England they are equally open to every commoner.

In reality no titles were legal in France, but those of the few who were termed peers of France: the rest were assumed at the pleasure of the person; and it was only necessary to be of a noble family, in order to decorate themselves with what ever title founded most agreeably to the ear of the individual. When the nobles were disrobed of their feudal privileges, then in truth and reality they were abolished. When they ceased to represent their own body, when the power of the nation was vested in an assembly chosen by the people, then ranks were in reality levelled; for rank without power will soon cease to be such, and no longer deserves the name. As to liveries and armorial bearings, they are trifles, which were, on the one hand, beneath the notice of the national assembly, and on the other, their abolition can never be a matter of serious disapprobation with men of sense. The principal motive for passing these decrees was, doubtless, that no badge of separation might remain to distinguish the privileged cast from the rest of the nation, and that no regular order might subsist, thus distinguished, inimical to the new constitution. But could the assembly have foreseen what a degree of odium this transaction was to bring upon their proceedings, they would have been greatly wanting in prudence not to have declined the measure; but the more reasonable conjecture is, that they did not foresee it. They considered it as an act much more indifferent and less invidious than many which they had passed; and conceived that, where no person was deprived of any thing substantial, no person would conceive himself substantially injured.

In the mean time the preparations for the general confederation proceeded with considerable rapidity. The *Champ de Mars*, so famous for having been the rendezvous of the troops which in the preceding year were intended to overawe the capital, was chosen for this solemnity. This piece of ground, which is about 400 toises, or 800 yards in diameter, is bounded on the right and left by lofty trees, and commands at the fur-

ther extremity a view of the military academy. In the middle of this vast plain an altar was erected for the purpose of administering the civic oath; and round it an immense amphitheatre was thrown up, of a league in circumference, and capable of containing four hundred thousand spectators. The entrance into the *Champ de Confédération* (as it was now called) was through triumphal arches. The king's throne was placed under an elegant pavilion in the middle, and on each side of it were seats for the members of the national assembly.

Two thousand workmen were employed upon this immense labour; but the citizens of Paris, fearing lest the preparations should not be completed at the appointed period, flocked from every quarter to assist in the undertaking. Not only the military, but the clergy and even the ladies, lent their cheerful assistance. With astonishment strangers beheld the most delicate and elegant of the female sex dragging the wheelbarrow, or handling with willing, but sometimes ineffectual endeavours, the weighty mallet or the spade. The provincials, who came from the remotest parts of the kingdom to join in the confederation, emulated the citizens in their ardour and enthusiasm; and the work was completed, so as both with respect to time and manner to surprise every spectator.

The important 14th of July at length arrived. The national guards of the departments, distinguished by their respective standards, the battalions of infantry, and the different troops of cavalry, the marine of France, and the foreigners who served under its banners, being all arranged in military order, the king and the national assembly took a solemn oath to maintain the constitution; the armed citizens repeated it amongst the applauses of innumerable spectators. They swore to live free or die; and this oath was taken on the same day through the whole extent of the kingdom.

Previous to the confederation, the duke d'Orleans desired leave to return and assist at this august ceremony.

On the receipt of his letter, M. de la Fayette ascended the tribune, and explained his motives for having advised the departure of the duke; which were in brief, that he apprehended an ill use might be made of his name, while present, in order to disturb the public tranquillity. These reasons, M. de la Fayette added, did he believe still subsist, though he saw nothing to make him apprehensive at present for the public safety." The duke arrived on the 11th of July, and, after first renewing his civic oath in the national assembly, assisted personally at the confederation.

C H A P. V.

Courts of justice—New taxes—Droit d'Aubaine, &c. abolished—Accusation of the Chatelet against M. M. d'Orleans and Mirabeau—Provincial disturbances—Affair of Nancy—Resignation of M. Neckar—Mutiny at Brest—Riot at Paris—Affairs of Avignon—Ejection of the non-juring clergy from their benefices—League formed by foreign powers against France—Troubles at Aix, Lyons, and Britany—Emigration of the king's aunts—Armed men found in the palace—Decrees relative to the army, the regency, &c.—Discussion of the law of inheritances—Death and character of M. de Mirabeau—Organization of the ministry—The king stopped as he was going to St. Cloud—Insurrections in the French colonies—Flight of the king—His return—Hostile preparations on the frontiers—Martial law proclaimed at Paris—The new constitution presented, and accepted by the king.

CONTRARY to general expectation, the grand confederation was performed without tumult or confusion, and nothing but the weather, which was damp and unfavourable, occurred to cloud or to disturb the magnificent scene. Though to the eye of a philosopher these ceremonies convey little more than the idea of a great national pantomime, yet in the minds of the populace this solemnity stamped an additional legality on the proceedings of the national assembly, and strengthened their hands.

The legislature made an advantageous use of the calm which succeeded the confederation, in completing the organization of the judicial department. Judges or justices of the peace were to be elected in each canton, for the determination of petty differences; tribunals for the adjudication of more important causes were established in districts; and a tribunal of *cassation*, or court of appeal, was appointed for the whole kingdom, where, under certain restrictions, the proceedings of the inferior

courts might be revised. Courts of criminal justice were established in each of the departments; and a high national court, for the trial of crimes against the state, completed the edifice. One institution, however, demands our attention, and we believe it was peculiar to the new jurisprudence of France. Boards of conciliation were appointed in every district, where the parties in a suit were to be cited personally, and where every means were to be employed to effect an amicable termination, before the cause could be brought to a hearing before the ordinary courts of justice. Family arbitrators were also authorized to terminate petty disputes between near relations, and the forms prescribed in all these cases were the simplest that could be invented. We have already remarked that the trial by jury was only adopted in criminal cases: an aristocratic writer observes on this subject with some archness, that "the trial by jury would also have been established in civil causes, if there had not been too many lawyers in the constituting assembly." This is indeed not the only objection to the new jurisprudence of France, since there is much room to doubt whether temporary and elective judges can ever be adequate to the purposes of substantial justice. Notwithstanding these defects, however, the code was deserving of some admiration for its simplicity, its consistency; for the gratuitous administration of justice; for the easy access which the poorest subject, when injured, might have to the means of redress; for the discouragement which it held forth to litigious and vexatious contests: and however the French revolution may be censured, in this part of the constitution other nations may find much worthy of imitation, and many institutions for the obvious ease and advantage of the people.

With respect to the pecuniary interests of the republic, it was also decreed that the legislative body should annually determine the sum total of the public expenses and contributions; and that, under the direction of the king, an administration should be established in each department, with an inferior or subordinate one in each

district, for the regulation and collection of the revenue. The police of each city or community was committed to magistrates chosen by the citizens.

To replace the salt tax, and the other odious and oppressive imposts, which had been abolished, the assembly imposed an easy land tax upon immovable property, and a poundage upon personal property and annuities; a tax upon patents, and a stamp tax upon contracts and other writings. These taxes were however but ill paid; and to remedy the deficiencies of the revenue, continual emissions of assignats became necessary; and even to supply the want of current coin, which had been greatly lessened by the continual emigrations, it was thought proper to issue assignats for the smallest sums. But paper credit, however responsible the bank on which it is dependent, is always attended with a temporary inconvenience. It circulates with less facility than specie, and commonly increases the balance of exchange in favour of foreign nations.

Several decrees of lesser moment, but which reflect credit on the liberality and wisdom of the assembly, were passed about this period. That in particular which restored to the protestants those possessions of which their ancestors had been deprived by the revocation of the edict of Nantes, is deserving of the highest encomiums; and that which abolished for ever all extraordinary taxes levied upon the Jews, was at once politic and just. These were followed by the abolition of the execrable droit d'aubaine, which assigned to the king the property of all aliens not naturalized, who died in France.

In the fate of the unfortunate Favras, the tribunal of the Chatelet had evinced themselves not the most unexceptionable judges of the competency of evidence. A still more embarrassed and dubious affair involved them in some disgrace soon after the confederation. That tribunal was charged by the assembly to take cognizance of the transactions of the 5th and 6th of October. On the 7th of August they brought their report sealed to the bar of the assembly, and in a pom-

pous address lamented the severe task which their duty to their country had imposed upon them; and concluded with informing the assembly that two of their own body were among the principal criminals. The assembly heard this denunciation with horror and consternation; the report of the Chatelet was referred to a committee; and the members against whom it was pointed appeared to be M. d'Orleans and M. Mirabeau the elder, whom they accused of a conspiracy to murder the queen, and to place M. d'Orleans upon the throne. The procedure of the Chatelet was printed; and before the committee had time to make their report, so incompetent was the evidence, and so inconclusive the reasoning, that though neither M. d'Orleans nor M. Mirabeau were at that time great favourites with the populace, the public voice had already acquitted them*: on the 2d of October therefore the assembly decreed, that on a full examination there was no cause of accusation against them. Others were also involved in the process; but this unpropitious commencement so totally annihilated all confidence in the tribunal to which the prosecution was referred, that the affair was dropped, and probably the guilty were permitted to escape.

Whatever might have been the motives of the Chatelet on this occasion, it is certain that the spirit of party never was more violent in France than about the period of which we are now treating. The aristocratic body, who had previously acted chiefly on the defensive, were now become the assailants, and no means were left untried to plunge the nation into a state of confusion. It must be allowed too, that the impatient and irritable

* It is by no means certain, however, that they were guiltless of the charge; but the error of the Chatelet was in not sufficiently investigating the evidence: and this is one among the many proofs that the French (and even those among them who are most practised in forensic proceedings) have no correct notions as yet of the administration of justice. In all their judicial proceedings a charge is dressed up in a style of declamation, and the facts if plausible are generally taken for granted; this was flagrantly the case in those two most horrid and atrocious transactions, the trial of the king, and of the unfortunate and ill-treated Cuffine.

temper of the French populace was an excellent engine to work with ; and the jealousy which existed between the ancient soldiery and the new militia afforded frequent opportunities but too favourable to the wishes of the malecontents. Petty tumults and continual distrust were excited in the frontier provinces, in different parts of Flanders, Alsace, and Lorraine, and a defection of some magnitude took place among the soldiery at Toulouse : but what happened at Nancy was of a still more serious nature, and deserves a particular detail.

As far as we have been able to collect from the journals of the national assembly, and other authentic information, the following appears a just statement of this dark and mysterious transaction. From the first establishment of the revolution, the French army had been in a state little favourable either to patriotism or subordination. The majority of their officers were of the ancient noblesse, and a mutual jealousy existed between them and the private soldiers. Every inducement had been employed to seduce the soldiers from their duty ; and when promises and blandishments did not prevail, the most severe measures were put in execution. The soldiers were frequently ill paid, and yet the most culpable profusion had been made of the money voted for the support of the army. Such, by the evidence of a party of the national guard of Nancy at the bar of the assembly, was the state of the garrison in that city. The officers in general were inimical to the new constitution, and had made use of every temptation to destroy the attachment of the soldiers to the new arrangement. These means proving unsuccessful, they had adopted the most rigorous discipline ; they had withheld the pay of the soldiers, and even condemned them to run the gauntlet for demanding necessaries. They had endeavoured to persuade the men, that all these acts were in conformity with the orders of the national assembly, which refused any longer to furnish them with the usual allowance of bread, and which was upon the point even of depriving them of the augment-

ation of pay which had been established at the revolution.

In the same spirit the utmost pains were employed to produce distrust and mutual abhorrence between the citizens and the soldiers. Men were dressed in the uniform of the king's regiment (one of the regiments in garrison there), and employed to wound and insult the citizens. One of these persons was taken, and banished from the city at the request of the regiment; at the same time, some young officers were encouraged by their superiors to behave in the most indecent manner to several of the peaceable inhabitants; and even hired ruffians were engaged for the same purpose. Several of these were arrested, and a court-martial appointed, at the request of the regiment, for their trial: but M. Bouillé, who commanded in the province, had set himself in opposition to this measure. One of the grenadiers who had been active in these prosecutions, was menaced in the most insulting manner by an officer, who soon after deserted to the king of Hungary.

Wearied with these repeated indignities, and acts of oppression, the regiment at length threw off its allegiance, asserted loudly that they were wronged of their pay and their allowance, and demanded the regimental accounts. M. Denou threatened with the gauntlet all who presumed to call for the accounts. The regiment therefore immediately seized the military chest, and dispatched a deputation to Paris, to represent these facts to the national assembly.

The officers, however, took care to anticipate the representation of the soldiers, and were too intimately connected with the ministers, and some members of the assembly, to permit the complaints of the privates to be heard. The deputation from the regiment was arrested at Paris. M. de la Tour du Pin, the minister of war, made a formidable representation of the rebellious conduct of the regiment. The miseries resulting from a want of subordination, and the necessity of an example, were echoed through the assembly. On the 16th of August, a severe decree was passed, which au-

thorised the commander in chief of the province to reduce the insurgents by force.

In the mean time, the other regiments in garrison, the Swiss regiment of Chateaufieux, and the regiment of cavalry called *Mestre de Camp*, irritated by similar oppressions, and much disorganized by want of discipline, had concurred in the rebellion, had seized some of their officers, and were joined by great numbers of the populace.

The decree of the 16th was no sooner made public than, from knowing the character of the commander in chief, the most serious consequences were apprehended by all good citizens. The national guard of Nancy assembled, and offered to the regiments to undertake the part of mediators, and to send the terms of their submission by a deputation from their own body to the national assembly. The deputation proceeded immediately to Paris, and on the 31st of August appeared before the assembly.—On their representation, the decree of the 16th was repealed, and commissioners were appointed for the purpose of inquiring minutely into the circumstances of the case, and to punish the guilty, and reward the deserving.

Such an arrangement however did not suit the views of the perfidious and sanguinary Bouillé. Without waiting the result of the deputation from Nancy, he hastened with a fatal rashness (as was confessed even by his advocates) to enforce the decree of the 16th. He collected all the troops that he could assemble from every part, and such of the national guard as preferred a patriotic subordination to the immediate dictates of their feelings and their resentments. In spite of their offers of submission, he fell upon the regiments of Chateaufieux and *Mestre de Camp*; and after putting an immense number to the sword, he completely routed them, and took four hundred prisoners.

The king's regiment had been retained in their barracks by the exertions of some patriotic persons who urged them to submission. Even when M. Bouillé arrived, they were prevented from acting by the intrepid

dity and virtue of a young officer of the name of Desfilles. This intrepid young man, after urging his fellow soldiers by every motive to submit, assuring them that sooner or later they would experience the justice of the legislature, placed himself before the mouth of a cannon, which they were going to fire. He was forcibly dragged from this dangerous situation, but in the struggle received three or four wounds, of which he afterwards died.

The news of this event was received at Paris with horror. As M. Bouillé had not exceeded the authority which the national assembly had unfortunately conceded to him by the rash decree of the 16th, they could not legally inflict either punishment or censure upon him. The populace, however, who were not reduced to any such dilemma, gave a full vent to their feelings; they openly accused M. Bouillé of treachery, and a desire to effect a counter revolution, and even threatened the lives of the ministers. In a word, the resentment of the people seemed to menace the most dangerous excesses, which were only prevented by unusual circumspection and care. It is only necessary to add with respect to this business, that in the month of December following the assembly reversed all its own decrees against the insurgents at Nancy, liberated all the prisoners, and recompensed them as men who had unjustly suffered: at the same time they decreed public honours to the memory of the brave Desfilles, and placed his family under the protection of the state.

The decline of M. Neckar's popularity has been already noticed. He had not raised himself in the estimation of the people by a pamphlet which he published on the abolition of nobility, or at least of titles, which supported with much ingenuity the aristocratical order. Both previous to this step, and after it, he must have felt the gradual loss of the public esteem, and possibly had for some time meditated a retreat from office. The measure was however probably accelerated by the popular clamours on the affair of Nancy, which involved him (certainly unfairly) with the rest of the

ministers in that transaction. On the 4th of September he sent a letter of resignation to the assembly, and pleaded his ill state of health, which required his retiring to the baths in Switzerland; though he dropped some distant intimation of the uneasiness he had experienced in his situation. It is not to the credit of the national assembly, that no public notice was taken of this letter. The inflexible integrity of M. Neckar certainly demanded the highest veneration; his abilities entitled him to respect, and his services to gratitude.— But, what is the gratitude of public bodies! If, like one of his predecessors in office, he had retired, a public defaulter, infamously loaded with the spoils of his country, only to be employed in exciting enemies, and provoking the most profligate combinations against her, could he have been treated with more marked contempt?

The same parties, and the same factious spirit which prevailed in the army, pervaded also the navy of France. The national assembly had decreed the adherence of the nation to all existing treaties, in which the family compact was necessarily included; and as England continued arming on the Spanish dispute, a fleet of thirty sail was ordered to be equipped at Brest, as it was uncertain how far France might be involved in the expected hostilities. The disorders which took place among the seamen at Brest have been attributed to different causes. On the 13th of September while the squadron was fitting out with all possible expedition, the *Leopard* arrived from St. Domingo, having on board a part of the refractory assembly, who, being dissolved by the governor, had embarked on board the *Leopard*, both to save themselves from imprisonment, and to endeavour to make friends to their party in the mother country. As therefore the dissatisfaction commenced on board this vessel, on account of the admiral commanding a sailor to be imprisoned for intoxication, it was supposed by some that the crew had been depraved by their communication with the rebellious members of the St. Domingo assembly; while others have attributed it,

perhaps with more probability, to the general suspicion which the seamen entertained of their officers, the majority of whom were of the nobility, and possibly not well affected to the new constitution. M. Menou, in a report from the military and marine committees on the 21st of October, attempted to fix the blame on the inactivity and inertness of the ministers. This charge, however, did not appear well founded, though it was followed on the 27th by the resignation of the naval minister, M. de la Luzerne, who was succeeded by M. Fleurieu; the archbishop of Bourdeaux also resigned about the same time; and M. Duport du Tertre, a man possessed of every great and amiable quality, was appointed minister of justice. On the 16th of November M. Tour du Pin was replaced by M. du Portail.* The admiral M. Albert de Rioms, also resigned, with many of the officers; and M. Bougainville was appointed to the command of the fleet. The malecontents were with some difficulty reduced to subordination; but happily for France, she was delivered from the necessity of engaging in a war by the convention which was soon after signed between Spain and England.

It may be considered as a singularly fortunate circumstance, that, amidst all these disturbances in the exterior parts of the kingdom, the new police of Paris had preserved the metropolis tolerably quiet. The discontent excited by the affair of Nancy ended without violence. On the 13th of November, however, the tranquillity of the capital was once more disturbed, in consequence of a private dispute, which ended in a duel between M. Castries and M. Charles Lameth, in which the latter was dangerously wounded. As every report is at first exaggerated, the news was very gene-

* This was the first of those forced and violent changes of ministry which were the harbingers of the dissolution of all legal authority in France. On this occasion M. Cazal's pronounced a most eloquent discourse, in which he proved from history, that the legislative power interfering with the executive in the appointment of the subordinate agents of government could be only attended with the ruin of the nation.

rally spread that M. Lameth was killed ; and the people, ever prone to suspicion, immediately conceived the formidable idea of a general conspiracy successively to assassinate all the patriotic members. An immense mob was presently assembled at the hôtel de Castries, which they proceeded to spoil and destroy. M de la Fayette, whose vigilance was ever awake, no sooner heard of the commotion, than with a party of the national guard he repaired to the spot, and, with a fortitude which never forsook him, forcibly represented to the populace the rashness of their conduct. It is equally to the credit of each party, that the mob immediately desisted, and even, on coming out of the house, insisted that every man should be searched, to evince that plunder was not in the least their object.

On the 16th and 20th of November a business came before the assembly, which was pregnant with difficulty, and which suspended the public opinion for some succeeding months. It is well known, that the country of Avignon is inclosed on every side by the dominions of France ; that it formed anciently a part of Provence ; that it was alienated by a queen who was at that period both under circumstances of compulsion and a minor ; that, as soon as she came of age, she reclaimed it ; that the cession had not been formally acknowledged by the parliaments, and that several successive monarchs had renewed their claim to the city as a part of their hereditary dominions. On the other hand, it must be acknowledged, that long possession had given to the popes that title by which most sovereignties are held ; that the cession of Jane, queen of Naples, had been ratified by the states of Provence ; and that if some of the kings had denied the right of the pope, it had been acknowledged by others. A stronger reason solicited the assembly to incorporate this city with the kingdom of France, and that was the voice of the inhabitants of Avignon themselves. The papal government is notoriously the worst in the world ; it is even said, that justice was publicly bought and sold at Avignon ; nor

could any remonstrances to the pope obtain redress for the people. In this state of oppression, a large party in the city saw with a spirit of emulation the new government of France; they desired to make it their model, but still professed obedience to the pope. They elected a municipality, and formed the active citizens into a national guard. Such a state of things was scarcely consistent with a foreign dominion. A contest between the vice-legat and the people immediately succeeded: on the 10th of June a violent insurrection took place in the city; the people seized the palace; the papal arms were taken down, and those of France put up in their place; and a petition was dispatched to the national assembly, entreating, that the territory of Avignon might be incorporated into the dominions of France. To this first application the assembly only answered, by sending a body of troops to restore tranquility, and to preserve order in the city; at the same time adjourning the question concerning the object of the petition. In May 1791, the discussion was again resumed, and it was again deferred. In the mean time, as the papal party was strong, and the clergy apprehensive of being deprived of their influence and their wealth, a most dreadful civil war desolated this beautiful country. It would be disgusting, as well as tedious, to enter into a detail of the bloody scenes and the horrid outrages which succeeded. Let it suffice to say, that all these circumstances being made known to the assembly, after repeated deliberations, it was at length resolved, on the 14th of September 1791, that the territory of Avignon, with the adjacent county of Venaissin, should be considered as a part of the French empire, and that a compensation in lieu of these countries should be offered to the pope*. We have anticipated a little the order of these transactions, for the sake of perspicuity, and now return to the chain of our narrative.

We have already seen but too much occasion for cen-

* This was the first instance in which the legislature of France violated that excellent maxim which it had so solemnly enacted, to avoid all conquest, all accession of territory, all increase of dominion.

ture in the severe treatment which the national clergy experienced from the constituent assembly. Their situation was not improved by a series of decrees which were passed in the latter end of the year 1790. In the month of July, among other ecclesiastical regulations, it had been enacted, that every beneficed clergyman should solemnly take an oath, "to watch carefully over the faithful in the parish or diocese which was entrusted to his care; to be faithful to the nation, the law, and the king; and to maintain, to the utmost of his power, the new constitution of France, and particularly the decrees relative to the civil constitution of the clergy." Many of the clergy, on the first publishing of this decree, spontaneously offered to take the oath; but in many places the resolution continued a mere dead letter, till the 27th of November, when a most severe decree was enacted, declaring that all such clergy as should neglect to take the oath, should be considered as virtually ejected from their benefices; and condemning to severe pains and penalties all such as should prove refractory. The policy of this measure was certainly to place the government of the church in the hands of men who were well affected to the new constitution, and to disengage the nation from a number of disaffected persons, who might be dangerous if possessed of power. In this view, the measure, after what had been done, might be politic; but it certainly was not just. It might be a means of giving permanency to the new order of things, but it was a violent infringement on toleration; and may we never see civil liberty preserved by a tyranny exerted over the consciences of men? The consequence was, that many conscientious persons, who had been well affected to the constitution, resigned their benefices; and indeed the situation of honest men with strict notions of church authority, was rendered extremely perplexing by the public declaration of the pope, who testified in marked terms his disapprobation of the oath. It is but justice to add, that the severity of this decree was in some degree mitigated by a subse-

sequent law, which assigned to the non-juring clergy a pension of five hundred livres per annum.

The year 1790 closed with some accession of popularity to the national assembly. A statue was decreed to be erected to the memory of Rousseau, and his widow was allowed a pension. To a benevolent madman, who was possessed of infinite genius, which he had exerted with effect in the cause of liberty, such a tribute of respect might not be misplaced; and the pension to his widow was an act of charity; but when (at a subsequent period) the assembly decreed almost divine honours to the profligate and unprincipled Voltaire, they disgraced themselves in the eyes of all good men, and made their approbation be justly considered as an insult and degradation. Some other popular acts were passed; but what conferred upon them the most solid applause, was the report of the committee of finances, from which it appeared, that the national receipt exceeded the expenditure by three millions, and that there was upwards of 500,000*l.* sterling in specie in the public treasury. To the immortal honour of the assembly, the pernicious and disgraceful tax of LOTTERIES was totally abolished and prohibited. About the close of the year M. de St. Priest, minister of the interior department, resigned.

The first act of the new year was not less honourable to the constituent legislature. Instead of indicating (as its enemies insinuated) an inclination to prolong its session, like the long parliament of England, a list of articles was introduced, which were necessary to be discussed previous to the final establishment of the constitution; after the determination of which the assembly declared its intention of dissolving itself, and resigning its authority.

The jealousy of the neighbouring potentates now began to be alarmed, and there was much reason to apprehend that a league was formed against the rising liberties of France, among the most powerful nations of the continent. Cordons of troops were advanced from Germany on the north, from Spain on the south, and

from Italy and Savoy on the west ; and France might be said literally to be besieged with hostile armies. The events which took place in France retarded for a while the execution of this plan : but the dispositions of despotic courts never alter ; their action is occasionally interrupted by circumstances ; but their tenor is direct, and their conduct commonly consistent : what Leopold left unperformed, Francis at a more convenient season endeavoured to accomplish.

The only plea which the conduct of France afforded these powers for interfering in her domestic concerns, was the claims of the German princes who had estates in Alsace and Lorraine. On the subversion of the feudal institutions, the claims of vassalage, mortmain, &c. &c. which these princes considered as their right, were necessarily abolished. It was in vain that the national assembly repeatedly decreed them the amplest compensation. The views of the German courts were different. Alsace and Lorraine afforded the excuse ; but the object of the projected war was certainly not the seigniorial rights of a few petty princes, who would think themselves amply recompensed by the receipt of a few louis in their empty treasuries. The cautious politics of Leopold, however, led him to pursue the most courtly measures in treating with France. On the 22d of January the king communicated to the assembly a letter from the emperor of Germany, in which that monarch made the most unqualified protestations of his amicable intentions towards France ; but intimated at the same time, that " it was necessary that all the innovations that have taken place in consequence of the decrees of the 4th of August be done away, and matters put upon the ancient footing."—The king, when he communicated the letter, treated it merely as an official measure of the emperor, as head of the German empire ; and observed, that he received at the same time the most pacific assurances from the court of Vienna. The assembly, however, were not to be imposed upon by the finesse of Leopold ; they immediately decreed a considerable augmentation of the national force,

and that every defensive measure should be expeditiously adopted.

Several causes conspired to prevent the re-establishment of order in the provinces. The people in many places were too little instructed to enjoy legal and temperate liberty. The hopes of those who were adverse to the new constitution were elevated by the prospect of a counter-revolution; and the movements of the hostile powers; and the resentment of the refractory and ejected priests operated every where upon the fanaticism of the populace. At Aix a club or society, calling itself "Friends of the king and the clergy," was instituted; the members of which, on the 12th of December, indulged themselves in the imprudent measure of wearing the white cockade. In the evening of that day, some of the party met with a number of persons who belonged to a club of opposite principles; some pistols were discharged, and a riot immediately ensued. The mob hastened immediately to the prison, where a M. Paschalis, an advocate, had for some time been confined for seditious writings and practices; and, in defiance of the municipality and the national guard, tore him from his place of confinement, and hanged him, with two others of the aristocratic party, Messrs. Roquette and Dorimont, on the neighbouring trees.

At Lyons, on the other hand, a desperate but ill-concerted conspiracy was discovered, which had for its object, to corrupt the populace of that city, by distributing money among them; to bring back thither the ex-princes; to make that city the retreat of the king, if he could be detached from the national assembly; and, if not, the assembly was forcibly to be conveyed thither along with him.

In the neighbourhood of Vannes in Britany the fanatic clergy openly preached against the constitution: and in one country parish, the priest, after having celebrated mass, desired his congregation to kiss the crucifix, and gave them absolution.—"Go now," said he, "and plunge your daggers into the hearts of those impious persons who have degraded your holy religion:

you are saved!" The infatuated multitude, instigated by this incendiary exhortation, marched in a body to Vannes*. At this place, however, they found the Irish regiment of Walsh and the national guard of l'Orient prepared for their reception, and they were easily repulsed and dispersed.

The public attention was now occupied with a transaction which would have been of little consequence in any other circumstances of the state. On the 20th of February, the president of the national assembly received a letter from the king, stating that his aunts, the daughters of Louis XV. had left Paris that morning at six o'clock, and that, as he was persuaded that they could not legally be deprived of the liberty which the constitution gave to every citizen to travel wherever his inclination led him, he had not attempted to prevent their departure. This report was no sooner made than M. Camus proposed that the civil list should be diminished in proportion to the provision which the nation allotted them: this was again opposed by M. Martineau; but the assembly, considering the circumstance as unworthy of their notice, passed to the order of the day†. On the following day, however, the subject was renewed by M. Barnave, who, as the constitutional committee were then occupied in providing a series of regulations for the government of the royal family, proposed that they should be instructed to present to the assembly the plan of a decree to ascertain the right which persons allied to the throne should have to travel out of the kingdom. This proposal produced another from M. M. Martineau, Goupil, and others, that the law against emigrants should extend not only to the royal

* This fact is given on the authority of a decidedly democratic publication, and is therefore to be received with some caution.

† This absurd debate was terminated more abruptly than it might otherwise have been by a pleasantry of M. Menon—"All Europe will be astonished to hear," said he, "that the national assembly of France debated for four hours on the departure of two old women who chose rather to hear mass at Rome than at Paris."

family, but to all other individuals; and that a reasonable absentee tax should be imposed, in order to discourage emigration in general.

In the mean time the ladies continued their journey, and with a train of carriages presented themselves before Moret, and produced to the magistrates a passport from the king, countersigned Montmorin, and a declaration from the municipality of Paris, stating that they arrogated to themselves no right to stop any persons travelling through the kingdom. As, however, the municipality of Moret was informed that the matter was then under the consideration of the constitutional committee, they determined to arrest them. They had no sooner taken this determination, than a party of a hundred or more of the chasseurs de Lorraine, with a number of the domestics of M. Montmorin*, mayor of Fontainebleau, appeared before the gates, forced them open, and made a clear passage for the travellers. At Arnay-le-Duc, the municipality was more successful: there they effectually stopped the progress of the royal emigrants, and dispatched an account of their proceedings to the national assembly. On mature consideration, however, the legislative body decreed, that "as there was no positive law existing which sanctioned the arrest of mesdames, aunts to the king, it should be referred to the executive power;" and in consequence of this decree, after some delays, they were left to pursue their journey to Rome.

Thus the country was entirely deserted by all the different branches of the royal family, except monsieur. The people, whose fears and suspicions foresaw innumerable evils in these emigrations, assembled in a tumultuous manner at the Tuilleries; and a report being spread, that the only remaining brother of the king was about to depart also, the mob immediately directed their course to his palace, and insisted on a promise not to leave the kingdom. The prince conceded to the

* Not the minister of that name.---They were both massacred on the horrid second of September 1792.

wishes of the populace, and they dispersed with every appearance of satisfaction and joy.

On the 28th of February an event of a more extraordinary and suspicious nature occurred, and unfortunately contributed to increase the jealousy and dissatisfaction of the public. On the morning of that day, at the usual hour of divine service at the royal chapel, a gentleman after walking for some time in the gallery, requested of the attendants on the dauphin to be permitted to see the prince. As he passed into the apartment, a poniard of a peculiar construction was discovered under his coat: he was arrested, and examined before the mayor of Paris, and committed to custody.

While the mayor was occupied with this affair, intelligence was received of a riot in another quarter. The castle of Vincennes had been directed to undergo some repair; and as that edifice had formerly been used as a state prison, the jealousy of the populace immediately took fire, and their imaginations represented to them the horrible spectre of a Bastille still more formidable than that which had been demolished. The suburb of St. Antoine was presently in motion, and the object of popular suspicion was powerfully assailed. M. la Fayette was no sooner informed of this commotion, than he proceeded thither, accompanied by a strong party of the national guard. The populace were easily undeceived, and persuaded to disperse; but what was the surprise of the magistrates and the national guard, on their return to the Tuilleries, to find the gates barred against them; and as soon as they were forced open, the apartments were discovered to be filled with a number of men armed with sword-canes, pistols, and poniards, who had entered by a back gate which was opened to them by one of the gentlemen of the bedchamber. On inquiry being made by the king, "whence it happened that more than four hundred persons armed in a secret manner had introduced themselves without leave into his apartments?" he was answered, that his nobility, alarmed by the affair of Vincennes, had assembled for

his defence. The king rebuked their indiscreet zeal, and assured them, that he conceived himself perfectly safe under the protection of the national guard. The construction put upon this transaction by the popular party was, that a conspiracy had been concerted by the chiefs of the aristocracy to take advantage of the first commotion, which would necessarily draw off the national guard, to put in effect their long-projected plan of carrying off the king. Whatever might be the motive of the persons who assembled on this occasion, it is much to be regretted, as it gave too much countenance to the suspicions of the people, and cherished that spirit of party which it was so much the interest of the nation to counteract and subdue.

The beginning of March was dedicated by the assembly chiefly to the organization of the army. On the 4th it was decreed, that there should in future be only six marshals of France, whose functions should be entirely military, and whose pay was fixed at the rate of 30,000 livres per annum. With regard to the marshals of France then existing, it was determined, that such of them as should not be retained in the actual service of the state, should receive pensions adequate to their merits. On the succeeding day M. Victor Broglio addressed the assembly in favour of his father, marshal Broglio. He observed, "that the decree which had just been passed seemed to menace his respectable father, after a long and glorious career, with the deprivation of an honour which he had obtained, not from favour, but by merit. His father, he said, always a stranger to intrigue, and repulsed from court even for his virtues, had lived among the soldiers from the age of fourteen. He was their friend, their patron, their father. On the late unhappy occasion, he stated, that marshal Broglio had been drawn from his retreat in the country by the positive order of the king—That he was not privy to the assembling of the troops near the capital; and so little conscious of the design, that, on his arrival at court, his first address to the king was—'Here are the troops! but where is the enemy?' That he was

made acquainted with none of the measures of the court, and heard of the dismissal of M. Neckar only through the medium of public report---That when he arrived at Metz, so sensible had he been of the dishonourable cause in which he had been unconsciously engaged, that his spirits were sunk, and his health had been visibly on the decline---That he was now in so dangerous a state, that he was unable to return to his country, but had most obstinately resisted every attempt to seduce him from his allegiance to it."

In consequence of this representation, the assembly resolved---"That for the present nothing decisive should be decreed with respect to the rank of the marshal of France, as held by M. Broglio; but that he should still be considered as preserving his rank and title, &c."---The marshal afterwards, however resigned his rank, and formally declared for the emigrants; it is probable therefore that M. Victor Broglio was either deceived in his information, or was in hopes, by obtaining this favourable decision, to overcome the prejudices of his father, and induce him to return to his country.

Towards the conclusion of the month, several decrees were passed relative to the case of a regency.---"Women were excluded from that trust, as well as from the succession to the crown. The regency was declared to belong of right to the next male heir to the crown, during the whole minority of the king. The person of the minor king, however, was not confided to the regent; and he was pronounced to be of age at eighteen." Nearly about the same period it was decreed, "that all public functionaries ought to reside in whatever place was the proper scene of their employments---That the king, as the first public functionary, should be always resident, during the session, within twenty leagues of the legislative body; and that, if he or the heir apparent went out of the kingdom without a decree of the legislature, they should be considered as having abdicated their right to the crown."

This discussion was succeeded by one of still greater importance to the welfare of the community. This re-

garded the succession to property, and the right of disposing of possessions after death. In the outset of the debate, a very judicious distinction was established; and it was determined, 1st, to decide what was proper to be decreed with respect to the effects of persons dying intestate; and 2dly, whether any restriction ought to be laid on the right of testamentary alienation. In the first part of this investigation, the evils of the existing law of inheritances were strongly depicted. The absurd feudal institution of primogeniture was successfully attacked. It was demonstrated, that no such institution existed among the enlightened nations of antiquity; that it originated among the most barbarous tribes, and in the most uncivilized periods; that, in the present circumstances of society, it was warranted by no motive, no reason, no excuse; that its basis was injustice, its consequences profligacy and crimes; that the heir to a large fortune was generally corrupted by the possession of it, and the younger branches devoted to beggary and prostitution; that its effects in a public view were still more deplorable; and that it was the principal cause of that inequality among the citizens, which produced most of the vice and all the misery that exists in society. In fine, the opinion, that an equal division of property should take place among the children or relations of persons dying intestate, seemed to meet with unanimous approbation, and was some time after the discussion decreed.

On the other topic, there was a greater diversity of sentiment. In defence of the unlimited power of testators, recourse was had to the sacred light in which property ought always to be regarded; to the discouragement which would be held forth to industry, if a man was not permitted to dispose of his property agreeably to his inclination. The power of parents over their children was another forcible argument which was resorted to on this topic. To make children independent of their parents, it was said, would be the annihilation of good morals. Youth, it was added, is the torrid zone of human life, and must fall the unresisting

prey of temptation, of debauchery, of usury, of every existing corruption and depravity, if possessed of an independent patrimony. The character of a father was represented as the most sacred of titles; it was that which the deity himself assumes. The equal partition of estates, which was the principal argument employed by the other side, was adduced as a proof in favour of that arrangement which left the disposal of his property to the will of the testator. In the increase of population, it was said, the landed property of individuals would be subdivided into atoms, and the portions would be so extremely small as even to baffle the diligence of the collectors of the land-tax.

The arguments on the other side were not less ingenious. It was said, that the question in this case was simply, whether the will of the law, or the will of the individual, should be obeyed? The will or determination of the law ought to be preferred, because it was totally exempt from the influence of the passions; whereas the will of the individual was always under their direction. If the law had determined, therefore, that an equal division of property was for the good of the state, the will of the individual ought not to interfere with the public welfare. The arbitrary disposition of parents not only obstructed the public prosperity, by contributing to the inequality of fortune among the citizens; but frequently produced the most cruel outrages, by disinheriting their children, from passion or misrepresentation. It was not however contended that the restriction should be so absolute that a parent should have nothing left to distribute as a recompense to a deserving child, nothing to withhold as a check upon one less worthy; the object was, to leave a part of the inheritance at the disposal of the testator, and to distribute a part in such proportions as should seem most likely to promote the prosperity of the commonwealth.

Of this latter opinion was Mirabeau; but he spake no longer from the tribune, which had so often resounded with the thunders of his eloquence, but from

the dark and silent regions of the dead. While the law of successions continued in agitation, he was seized with an internal disease, the seat of which was said to be the pericardium, and at the early age of forty-two was cut off in the meridian of earthly glory. During the most severe part of his illness, and even while struggling in the arms of death, he continued still the man of the public. A few hours before his decease he sent for the bishop of Autun, and observed to him, that the law of inheritances was the order of the day. He requested him to take down his sentiments on the subject, and report them to the national assembly. It is difficult to say whether the affliction with which they heard the news of his death, or the respect which they seemed to pay to his last sentiments, was more honourable and conspicuous. Some suspicions were entertained that he died by poison: but, on opening his body, no proofs were found to justify such a conjecture*.

The present age has not seen a more extraordinary character than M. de Mirabeau. His talents were brilliant, and the times and situation were favourable to the exercise of them. He was formed by nature and by habit to govern and direct a popular assembly. His deep penetration, his promptitude, his fluent eloquence, his powerful voice, were all adapted to command attention, and to silence or confute. Born of a noble,

* Dissection, however, does not always afford a decisive proof upon this subject. Mirabeau died suddenly, and died at a most critical period---If he died by poison, he certainly was poisoned by some of his own party, for no others could have access to him. It is well known that suspicions were entertained, for some time previous to his death, that he had been purchased by the court; and whether the suspicion was well founded or not, it is certain that the leaders of the Jacobins and republican party were extremely jealous of his authority and weight with the people. But whatever was the cause of his death, it was a most unfortunate event for France. The new constitution was almost entirely his work, and had he lived he would have defended it; and probably by his abilities and power with the people might have prevented many of the calamities and enormities which have since afflicted and disgraced his country. From the death of Mirabeau almost every public measure in France has been injudicious and impolitic.

though not of an opulent family, his early education had initiated him in all the engaging, all the social arts; his love of pleasure had led him into a variety of situations, and had made him perfectly acquainted with the human character; the persecution and distress which he had encountered in early life, had rendered him firm; a tedious confinement had made him studious. Few statesmen possessed more extensive views; few orators have been capable of bolder flights, of a more passionate address, or a more energetic expression.

Of his private life we profess to know but little: common report, however, has not spoken of him in this view in the most favourable terms. His private character clouded with suspicion his public conduct; though it must be confessed, that there is nothing upon record which justifies such conjectures. Though he defended royalty, it would be harsh to say that he did it only to promote his interest with the monarch: though he pleaded for the admission of ministers to the legislative body, we have no authority to assert, that he meant to solicit an employment. He professes of himself, that his system of politics was that which is termed the moderate system. Perhaps every man who sees deeply into human nature, and who knows the weakness of mankind, and the instability of popular counsels, will be moderate. He is even said in his last illness to have expressed his fears lest the democratic party of France should go too far in weakening the executive government.

As an orator, the fairest testimony to his memory is the amazing power which he possessed in a numerous and turbulent assembly, and his confessedly excelling all the efforts of his illustrious rivals and contemporaries. The faculty on which he appears most to have valued himself, was that of improving on the observations of others, and perpetually drawing even from his adversaries a copious fund of matter. His writings are unequal, and not unfrequently obscure. In delineating the characters of other men, he is severe, sarcastic, and uncandid; and in his gallery of portraits (if it be in-

disputably his)* he appears to have made sacrifices to jealousy and envy unworthy of his own great talents, and unbecoming a liberal mind.

The honours which he received from his country are perhaps unparalleled in the present age. During his illness his door was besieged by inquiring citizens, whose countenances evinced that they considered him as the saviour of their country. The directory of Paris and the national assembly decreed a mourning of eight days. By a resolution of the legislature also, a public funeral was ordered, and was attended by the national assembly, the ministers, the magistrates and judges in their robes, the national guard of Paris, the society of Friends of the Constitution, or Jacobins, and an incredible number of spectators. The magnificent new church of St. Genevieve was consecrated for the reception of the remains of great men, and Mirabeau was the first who was publicly decreed that honour. As that church however was not complete, the body was for the present deposited in St. Etienne du Mont, which adjoins St. Genevieve, by the side of the coffin which contains the ashes of Descartes.

The next discussion which engaged the attention of the assembly, was the organization of the ministry. The ministers were declared responsible; and it was also decreed, that no member of the national assembly could take any part in administration till four years after the conclusion of that legislature of which he was a member. The appointment of ministers was vested in the king; but their number was to be regulated by the legislature. The ministers then appointed were, 1st, A minister of justice, who was to keep the great seal; to execute all laws relative to the sanctioning of decrees; to preserve correspondence with all the inferior departments of justice; to submit to the legislature all questions of jurisprudence, &c. 2d, A minister of war, to superintend the regulation of all the troops of the

* This, however, is more than doubted by some good judges.—Why have we not an authentic collection of his works?

line, &c. ; to order the movements of the armies against the enemy, &c. 3d, A minister of foreign affairs, to superintend and conduct all correspondence with foreign courts ; to enforce the execution of treaties ; and to have a general care of the political and commercial interests of the kingdom. 4th, A minister of marine and for the colonies. The minister of foreign affairs to have a salary of 150,000 livres (about 7,400l.) and the rest 100,000 livres (about 5,000l.) per annum. The king and the ministers to compose a great council of state, for the due exercise of the executive power.

The noblesse assembled on the borders of Alsace, for the purpose of reconquering their titles, began now to create some alarm in the people. The emigrant army had been reviewed by the prince de Condé : their uniform was black, faced with yellow, with a death's head surrounded with a laurel wreath on one cuff, and a sword on the other, with the motto, "Conquer or die." The emigrants also, it was added, were well received by most of the German princes, and every thing appeared hostile on the frontiers. As the cardinal de Rohan had taken an active part in seducing the people from their duties, an act of impeachment was decreed against him and some other of the principal emigrants.

With this circumstance several others occurred to keep awake the ever-watchful eye of popular suspicion. The king, whether he entertained them through prejudice and predilection, or through mere compassion, was surrounded with non-juring priests, and other persons of a dubious character ; and the people had not forgotten the singular transaction of the Tuilleries on the 28th of February, which in all probability was frequently exaggerated and misrepresented to them. However, therefore, we may condemn, we cannot be surprised at the tumult which took place on the 18th of April, while the royal family was preparing to set out for St. Cloud, where they intended to pass the Easter holidays. The populace, who considered this as only foreboding the flight of the king, and a counter-revolution, clamorously surrounded the carriage, and insist-

ed on their majesties' return. It was in vain that M. Bailly and M. de la Fayette opposed this phrensy; in vain they exerted themselves to procure a free passage for the carriage. A set of orators better adapted to the ears of the common people, exclaimed, "If the king escapes, there will be a civil war, and the streets of Paris will be deluged with the blood of the citizens." The national guard refused to act—"We know," said the grenadiers, "that we are violating the law; but the safety of the country is the first of laws."

The royal family, in short, was obliged to return. The king on the following day repaired to the assembly, where, with becoming firmness and dignity, he complained of the insult, and declared his intention of persevering in his resolution. He was answered in a respectful speech by the president; and he proceeded on his journey. At the same time, his majesty embraced this opportunity of notifying to all the foreign courts his acceptance of the constitution; and, in compliance with a request from the municipality of Paris, dismissed from about his person those obnoxious persons who had been a principal cause of the suspicion. New assurances of fidelity to the constitution, and of loyalty to the king, passed between the sovereign and the national assembly, and all was quiet.

The writers of all parties have done justice to the spirit and propriety which distinguished the conduct of M. de la Fayette on this occasion. On the 21st, he, with the other staff-officers, sent in their resignation, observing, that since the national guards would no longer obey, they must cease to retain a command which was merely nominal. This event was no sooner known than all Paris was seized with a general consternation; nor could all the machinations of La Fayette's enemies prevent their soliciting in a body, and under circumstances the most respectful to him, that he would re-assume the command. After some hesitation on his part, and the strongest assurances given on theirs of entire obedience, he agreed on the 24th to comply with their wishes.

During these transactions in the capital, the provinces could not even yet be pronounced in a perfect state of tranquillity. At Toulouse in particular, several citizens were assassinated on the night of the 17th of March. The murder was attributed to the officers or soldiers of the regiment of St. Barthelemi. The people immediately took arms, but happily the tumult ended in burning the colours of the regiment. The real authors of the assassinations, however, escaped into Spain.

These commotions, which agitated the mother country, were however trifling when compared with the fatal animosities which prevailed in the colonies. The decree of March 1790 was so far from quieting the jealousies and disturbances which existed, that its immediate effect seemed to be to kindle the whole of the French West-Indies into a flame. Before the arrival of the commissioners who were to enforce the decree, a mulatto of the name of Ogé, attempted to excite a rebellion in St. Domingo: his party was, however, defeated: he took refuge among the Spaniards; they surrendered him, and he expired upon the wheel. The very troops which had been sent from France to restore tranquillity, became infected with the spirit of insubordination. A regiment of native troops too, which was named the regiment of Port-au Prince, assassinated their colonel. The rebellious regiment was embarked, and sent to Europe; but the king's commissaries still exercised a feeble and dubious authority.

But the very decree of the assembly, the substance of which has been already intimated, proved the most deplorable source of discord. In that decree, parochial assemblies were directed to be held previous to the forming of a colonial constitution; but no definition was given of the persons who were to form these meetings. The people of colour, not being excepted, concluded naturally that they were virtually comprised in the law. The most violent contests ensued, and a deputation was sent over to the national assembly, to demand an explanation.

In May 1791, the matter was warmly agitated in the assembly. The advocates in favour of the people of colour urged the declaration of rights, which the assembly itself had agreed on as the basis of their new constitution, and even appealed to a higher authority, the great fundamental principles of reason and justice. The colonial deputies, and their abettors, confessed that the prejudice against the people of colour was absurd and unjust; but they alleged that it was a prejudice which could not be annihilated by a single decree, or be obliterated in a short space of time. That a law which should at once elevate these persons to the same rank with the white colonists, would expose the island to the severest calamities. The assembly found itself in a most difficult predicament. The free people of colour on the one hand, and their dependents, were numerous and wealthy; and, on the other, the whites in the French islands were masters of nearly 200,000 negroes, were possessed of all the actual power, and had exhibited the most alarming symptoms of independence. They had already opened their ports to foreign nations, and had threatened to transfer their allegiance to the English government. The troops which had been sent had been debauched from their duty, and corrupted in their principles, and little reliance could be placed upon new embarkations. In this dilemma, the legislature proceeded gradually, and with extreme caution.

On the 13th of May, a decree was passed to quiet the apprehensions of the colonists with respect to the liberation of the negroes; and it was established as a constitutional article, "that the legislature of the mother country should decide nothing with respect to the liberation of the slaves, but upon the actual and formal demand of the colonial assemblies." This was followed, on the 15th, by another decree equally cautious, and in effect partial to the white colonists; which was, that people of colour born of free parents on both sides, should be admitted into all the colonial assemblies: and as to those whose parents on one side only were free, the legislature would not determine any thing till they heard the sentiments of the colonial assemblies.

Thus, by a repetition of the same timid policy which had produced the disturbances, the assembly still continued to widen the breach. Neither party was satisfied with the decree. The majority of the people of colour were not born of parents who were both free, since it happened that a considerable number were the offspring of slaves who had been in a state of concubinage with their masters; and the white colonists, on the other hand, found their darling prejudice invaded even by this trifling innovation. The most fatal discord manifested itself immediately. The assembly had sent over no troops to enforce its own decree. The colonists complained, that the decree in itself was impracticable. Such a scrutiny as it required into the pedigree and extraction of individuals, could not be conducted without offence, without difficulty, and litigation. The white colonists represented in the strongest terms, that this last decree was a total violation of the preamble to the former: though the assembly had sanctioned the continuance of slavery, they still feared the abolition of the slave trade, and determined to relax nothing in their severity and oppression of the people of colour.

In the mean time, the enemies of the revolution were not inactive in inflaming the minds of both parties.—The slaves, whether instigated by incendiaries, or whether finding the civil authority which held them in obedience almost annihilated, soon began to take a part in the disputes; and discord, violence, and bloodshed pervaded every part of the colonies. In Martinico, and the smaller islands, after much contest, order has been partly restored; but St. Domingo still remains a melancholy scene of desolation and civil war.

In the latter end of June, the city of Paris, and the whole kingdom of France, were thrown into the most violent consternation by the desertion of the king. It was remarked, that for some weeks previous to this event the emigrations had greatly increased; and the circulating specie of the kingdom disappeared, as it were by a miracle. The non juring priests were more active

and audacious than ever, and emissaries were employed to corrupt the soldiery of almost every regiment, and especially on the frontiers.

The perfidious Bouillé, who had so wantonly imbrued his hands in the blood of his fellow-soldiers, in the affair of Nancy, was the principal agent on this occasion. By a variety of fictions and excuses, he evaded for a long time the civic oath; but at length he took it with such spontaneous tokens of zeal as left no room to doubt of his fidelity. He was entrusted with the protection of the frontiers; a trust which he exercised more consistently with his own character and views, than with the principles of duty and honour. He either permitted the fortifications of all the frontier towns to run to decay, or assisted in their dilapidation. The garrisons were left without provisions or ammunition. The national soldiery were replaced wherever it was possible with foreigners, and the utmost pains were taken to spread disunion and discontent among the national troops. The place nominally appointed for the retreat of the king, was Montmedy, a fortified town of Luxemburgh; but it was generally supposed that his actual residence was to be within the emperor's dominions. Here the emigrants from all quarters were to be assembled, and were to act in concert with the powerful succours which were to be furnished by Prussia and Austria, while other diversions were to be made on the side of Spain and Savoy, by the respective monarchs of those countries.

Such is the account which is most generally believed of the motives and plan of this ill-concerted and unfortunate journey; unfortunate for the country, because it destroyed that confidence which the people ought to have in the executive government; and doubly unfortunate for the monarch, because it for ever lost him the love of a people, who, in the most distressful and tumultuous circumstances of the revolution, was never before known to waver or abate in the personal regard which they retained for their sovereign. The king's intention was not kept such a profound secret, but that

It was known to M. Gouvion, one of the officers of the national guard, who communicated it to the mayor and M. la Fayette: the guard was in consequence doubled, and such precautions were taken as appeared likely to prevent every possibility of effecting the intention. On the night of the 20th of June, however, the king, the queen, madame Elizabeth, sister to the king, and the whole of the royal family disappeared. Monsieur and madame took the road to Mons; and the king's party that of Montmedy.

If a test had been wanting of the spirit and patriotism of the nation, none could have been devised so satisfactory as this. The assembly received the news with a calmness and dignity, sufficient almost to discountenance opposition. Their first care was the public safety and tranquillity. They committed to the ministers the execution of the laws, and the other political functions of the king. A new oath of fidelity to the nation was prescribed to the military. Couriers were dispatched to all the different parts of the kingdom, with orders to stop the fugitives, if possible, and to recommend the preservation of peace and good order. After these precautions, the assembly, with unparalleled calmness, resumed their ordinary labours, and proceeded to the discussion of the penal code.

Among the people, the first impulse was a combined emotion of consternation, surprise, and indignation. The king's arms and effigies were taken down and broken by the populace of Paris. A proclamation from the assembly, however, soon restored order. The national guard assembled; deputations from different bodies appeared at the bar of the assembly, with the strongest and most firm professions of patriotism and obedience.

Though the majority of the nation, however, thus evinced its attachment to the revolution, the flight of the king was viewed in very different lights, according as the different parties felt their particular prejudices affected by the event. At the first of the revolution, two parties only divided the mass of the people; the

friends of privileges and aristocracy, and the friends of liberty: but the latter had since divided, and a party more dangerous to the new constitution than even the aristocracy themselves had started up; a party, who, in quest of ideal perfection, are never satisfied with any established form of government; but whose unquiet minds, ever in pursuit of a visionary theory, neglect the more important objects of peace, industry, and stability of government, which are the only circumstances that can give greatness or prosperity to a nation.

To the republican party the departure of the king was a matter of triumph: their love of change was now likely to meet at least a present gratification: they enlarged upon the absurdity of a government which enabled an individual to throw the whole state into confusion: they represented the king as a perjured monster, whose patriotism and love for his people would presently be evinced by his entering France at the head of hostile armies, to ravage the country, and to drench it in blood. The loss of authority, they stated, must be ever, to him who once possessed it, a subject of regret; and they exhorted the lovers of liberty, even if the king's flight should be prevented, to make use of the opportunity to relieve the nation from a natural enemy.

The more temperate and sober thinkers saw the matter in a very different point of view. The majority of them preferred a limited monarchy, as at least the most expedient form of government, and considered it as absurd in a nation enjoying perfect liberty, to dispute about the mode or form in which it should be administered. They considered, that even if the republican form was preferable, custom had inured the French to monarchy, and their strongest prejudices inclined them to support it: that the nation was not in a state to endure the shock of a second revolution. They therefore contemplated it as the happiest event that could occur, should the king by any fortunate chance be restored; and foresaw a train of the most formidable

evils threatening the kingdom and the people, should he fall into the hands of their enemies.

The hopes of the republicans were blasted for the moment by the vigilance and activity of two obscure individuals. To favour their escape, the royal family had obtained a passport through the medium of the Russian ambassador, in the name of a baroness de Kortz, with her suite, as travelling to Frankfort. They travelled in the most private manner till they found themselves at a considerable distance from the capital, when they were furnished by Bouillé with detachments of dragoons, under the pretence of guarding some treasure for the pay of the soldiers. They proceeded without interruption for one hundred and fifty-six miles, and were but a few leagues from the frontiers when they were arrested. At St. Menchould, the post-master, M. Drouet, had formerly been a dragoon in the regiment of Condé. He immediately recognised the queen, and was forcibly attracted by the resemblance of the king to his portrait on the assignat of fifty livres. He was confirmed in his suspicions, on seeing the detachment of dragoons relieved by a detachment of hussars, and determined to stop them; but, being alone, was prudent enough not to expose himself to the opposition of the soldiers. He suffered the carriage to pass, but mounted a swift horse, and took a cross road to Varennes, which was their next stage. He communicated his suspicions to the post-master there, who had also formerly been a dragoon; and they concluded that the only mode of effecting their purpose was to barricade the street and bridge over which the carriages must necessarily pass. It was at this time near midnight, but fortunately, on the bridge there stood at the moment a waggon loaded with furniture; they overset it, and called together the mayor, the procureur de la commune, and the commandant of the national guard, and in a few minutes the number of the patriots was increased to eight men. The commandant and the procureur approached the principal carriage, and asked the names of the travellers. The queen petulantly answer-

ed, they were in haste, and produced the passport, which was thought a sufficient warrant by several persons ; but the post-masters combated the opinion, on the ground of its not being countersigned by the president of the national assembly ; and asked why a Russian baroness should be escorted by the military of France ? It was determined therefore to stop the travellers ; and they retired to the house of the procureur. After some parley the procureur produced a picture of the king, and asked him " if that was not his portrait." His majesty then throwing off his disguise, replied, " My friends, I am indeed your king—I have fled from Paris, from poniards and from bayonets—I have determined to take refuge in the provinces, where I hope to find loyalty and respect—My route is for Montmedi—I have no intention of leaving the kingdom ; I entreat you not to impede my progress."

The national guard now arrived in considerable numbers, and at the same moment the hussars, who endeavoured sword in hand to force the house where the king was ; but were answered by the national guard, that they should never carry him off alive. The commandant of the national guard had placed at each end of the street two field-pieces, which however were not charged ; but they were sufficient to intimidate the hussars, who, upon the commandant ordering the artillerymen to their posts with their matches in their hands, relinquished their object, and quietly surrendered the king to the custody of the national guard.

The news of these transactions was received by the assembly with inexpressible satisfaction. M. Bouillé was suspended from his functions ; and orders were given for arresting him, and all who appeared to be concerned in the flight of the king : but Bouillé evaded the national resentment by flying the kingdom. The assembly next appointed two commissioners to examine the inferior agents of the king's flight ; and three commissioners, Messrs. Tronchet, d'André, and Dupont, were appointed to receive the declaration of the king and queen.

The royal family was escorted to Paris by a considerable body of the national guard, who increased in numbers as they approached the metropolis. Messrs. Barnave, Petion, and Latour Maubourg had been dispatched towards Varennes for the purpose of accompanying them back to Paris; and public tranquillity was so well preserved, that they entered the Tuilleries on the 25th without any disturbance, and with no apparent inconvenience but the fatigue of the journey. On the 27th the commissioners waited on the king and queen to receive their declarations. The king persisted in the assertion that he had made from the first, that he had no intention of leaving the kingdom, and meant only to fix at Montmedi, which is a fortified town, till the vigour of government should in some degree be restored, and the constitution settled. A further reason for preferring this as the place of his residence, was, he added, that in case of any disturbance on the frontiers he might be ready to present himself in the post of danger, and to prevent insurrection. His reasons for quitting Paris, he declared to be, the insults to which he was liable there, and the inflammatory publications which were daily produced, particularly against the queen, which rendered him apprehensive for her safety still more than for his own in the metropolis. The declaration of the queen rested entirely on the plea, "that as the king had determined to remove himself and family, it was impossible that she could admit the thought of voluntarily parting from him and her children."

Monsieur and Madame, who had taken a different road, were more successful in effecting their escape, and arrived safe at Brussels on the 23d.

The necessity of completing the fabric of the constitution became now more than ever apparent, and the assembly laboured incessantly on the municipal code and the organization of the army. In the mean time every precaution was taken to preserve the peace of the kingdom; and a decree was passed, the substance of which was, that such of the emigrants as did not return with-

in two months should be subject to triple taxes for the year 1791.

The flight of the king seemed indeed the signal for the emigrants to commence their hostile proceedings. M. Cazalés and some others of the aristocratic party sent in their resignations to the national assembly; troops were levied on the frontiers in the king's name, and many of the former officers of the royal regiments exerted themselves to seduce the soldiers from their allegiance by promises of advancement and high rewards: their attempts, however, were in general without success; a circumstance which has not been adverted to by those who suppose the attachment of the French soldiery to the revolution to have been entirely venal. As these levies were made in the name of the king, he thought it proper formally to disavow them, which he did in a letter to the national assembly dated the 7th of July.

The return of the king appeared to make little alteration in the designs of the sovereigns who were confederated against France. Spain, indeed, whose political interests were more diametrically opposite to a rupture with France, renewed on the occasion its professions of amity. The other courts kept still at a distance, and the German frontier was crowded with troops, and every where engaged in military preparations. He must know little indeed of public affairs, who can suppose that such a circumstance could make any alteration in the intentions of the combined courts. The politics of despots are always selfish; increase of territory is still their favourite pursuit. It would be weak to suppose that compassion for the emigrants, sympathy for the king, or even zeal for the maintenance of royal authority, would be motives strong enough to engage them in the expences and difficulties of war. A stronger incitement must be supposed; and that could be no other than the dismemberment of France, connected most probably with the destruction and annihilation of the petty states of Germany. Victorious, Austria and Prussia may be enriched with the spoils of France; and

even disappointed in that object, as the smaller states of Germany will ultimately perhaps be the chief theatre of war, excuses may be found for placing them under the protection of more powerful empires, and for aggrandizing these at the expence of their weak and indigent neighbours.

France, however, still continued in too united a state to warrant any immediate enterprise against her. Addresses breathing the strongest professions of loyalty and attachment to the constitution poured in from every quarter. Foreigners resident in France seemed solicitous of the honour of being classed among her citizens. The conduct of the assembly was not unworthy the confidence which the nation seemed to place in its virtue and patriotism. Calmness, dignity and moderation characterized its proceedings at this period. In opposition to the violent republicans, the legislature tenaciously adhered to its constitutional decree concerning the inviolability of the king's person. Even the emigrants were treated with a degree of indulgence: the prince de Condé himself, though professedly in a state of war with his country, did not experience either haste or severity from the assembly. M. Duveyrier was sent as envoy to him and the other princes, to solicit their return to the enjoyment of happiness and security in the bosom of their country; but this ambassador of peace was imprisoned, and insulted in the most barbarous manner.

The unanimity which prevailed throughout France, from the time of the king's return till his acceptance of the constitution, was however interrupted by a short but disgraceful riot at Paris. Several efforts had been made by ill-disposed persons, supposed to be in the pay of the emigrants, or of the hostile princes, to disturb the public tranquillity, by circulating lists of members of the assembly who were reported to be bribed to betray their trust, and other insidious manœuvres. These efforts however all proved abortive till the morning of the 17th of July, when the magistrates were alarmed by the report that a large body of seditious persons

were about to assemble in the Champ de Mars, the professed object of whom was to petition against the re-establishment of the king, a measure which the Jacobin club had been very active to promote. Two of the magistrates were sent to the suburb of St. Antoine, where they had the satisfaction to find that every thing was quiet. At eleven o'clock, however, two unfortunate persons, who had secreted themselves under the altar of confederation, were murdered by the mob, on the unfounded suspicion that they had intended to blow it up with gunpowder. Three municipal officers were therefore dispatched, at the head of a battalion of national guards, to seize the murderers and disperse the insurgents. The mob attacked the national guard, and one man had the audacity to fire on M. la Fayette himself. The man was seized; but M. la Fayette, with a false generosity, permitted him to escape. The red flag was now displayed, and martial law proclaimed. The national guard was at length obliged to fire upon the people, who did not disperse till about twelve were killed, and fifty or sixty wounded. It was asserted, with what truth it is difficult to say, that foreign emissaries were discovered among the populace distributing money, and exciting them to rebellion.

The period now approached, when the constituent assembly were to terminate their labours. A committee had been for some time employed in compiling and digesting into a code the constitutional decrees. and on the 4th of August it was read to the assembly by M. Thouret, and debated article by article on the following days. On the 3d of September it was presented to the king. He signified his acceptance of it in writing on the 13th; and the following day he appeared at the assembly, introduced by a deputation of sixty members, and solemnly consecrated the assent which he had already given, and concluded with an oath "to be faithful to the nation and to the law, and to employ the powers vested in him for the maintenance of the constitution, and the due execution of the law."

While the constitutional act was in agitation an additional decree was passed, importing that no branch of the royal family could exercise any employment in the gift of the people; and on the 30th of September the constituent national assembly terminated an uninterrupted session of two years and four months, and spontaneously dissolved itself.

In treating of the different acts of the assembly, we have freely criticised such parts of the new constitution as appeared liable to objection. One general error must appear on the perusal of it to most readers; and that is, the extreme weakness of the executive power. Unless the agents of government are protected and supported in the execution of their several duties, their operations must necessarily be timid, feeble; and ineffective. Perhaps the impeachment of ministers, which is a most solemn, a most important, and also a most dangerous branch of legislative authority, unless exercised with great discretion, ought to be subjected to such formalities as might render it difficult upon frivolous pretences. Perhaps the concurrence of a certain portion of the legislative body ought to be required before an impeachment could be brought forward or moved for; since it appears that, if a popular harangue from a single demagogue is sufficient to displace a minister, and even subject him to a criminal prosecution, these offices will never be executed by men of spirit and character.

Besides those errors of legislation which we have noted, the leaders of the revolution were guilty of some others. Before the constituent assembly dissolved itself, measures ought to have been taken for assembling the new legislature in some place where its deliberations would have been more free and independent than they could be in the factious metropolis; and they should have corrected the error into which their own vanity betrayed them of admitting a numerous and insolent audience to seat themselves in the galleries, as judges of the debate, which they frequently disturbed by their insolent testimonies of applause or disapprobation.

Another serious misfortune to France was the influence acquired by the popular societies. The Jacobin club originated from a small and secret association of about forty gentlemen and men of letters, who united themselves, long previous to the meeting of the states-general, for the purpose of disseminating political knowledge among the mass of the people. It was afterwards melted into the Breton club, at Versailles, during the first sessions of the national assembly; and the society becoming numerous on the removal of the king and assembly to Paris, it obtained possession of the chapel of the Jacobins on the dissolution of the monastic orders. The popularity which it acquired soon rendered it exceedingly numerous, and this circumstance pointed it out as a proper engine to work upon the passions of the multitude. From a very early period of its institution, one principal object was to discuss such political questions as were likely to be agitated in the national assembly, in order that the members might act in concert, according to the decisions of the majority. This plan was reduced to a system, when the club became numerous, and a regular president and secretaries were chosen, and it became a national assembly in miniature. Besides the members, an immense multitude of auditors were admitted into the galleries, who applauded or condemned the speakers as passion or caprice dictated. Here the most inflammatory declamations were heard with the most clamorous testimonies of approbation, and every proposition in the least inclining to moderation of sentiment or wisdom in political conduct was reprobated and condemned. In few words, it became ultimately the mere vehicle of faction, where, as is usually the case in such instances, the worst men and the worst measures were commonly triumphant. *Fraternal* societies (according to the barbarous jargon, which was adopted as the language of anarchy) were instituted in all the considerable towns in the kingdom; and the only object of emulation in these nests of political hornets seemed to be, which should act most unwisely and least for the public benefit.

In imitation of the Jacobins, several other Societies were instituted for the purpose of political discussion; and thus, independent of the perversion of sentiment, an intolerable waste of time was occasioned to the lower classes of society. It should have been one of the great objects of the national assembly to dissolve or restrain these factious assemblages, and to restore the nation, from that political delirium, in which so great a revolution must necessarily involve them, to the sober paths of industry, economy, and proper subordination.

C H A P. VI.

Character of the legislative assembly—The meeting of that body—Indications of faction—Threatening appearances—Convention of Pilnitz—Concert of princes—Decree concerning the king's brothers—Answers from foreign courts—League formed in the north—Decree against the emigrants—Exercise of the royal veto—Intrigues of the republican faction—Imprudence of the emigrants—Troubles in St. Domingo—Non-juring priests—Decrees against them—Second interposition of the veto—King's speech on the state of foreign affairs—Petion elected mayor of Paris—Club of Feuillans—Seditious proceedings of the Jacobins—Designs of Leopold—State of the French finances—Troubles in the colonies—Hostile appearances—Impeachment of ministers—Death of the emperor—His character—Triumph of the Jacobins—New ministry—Dumourier—Decree of sequestration against the emigrants.

WITH the constituent assembly the sun of French liberty set. With it the wisdom, the moderation, the dignity of the nation was dissolved. That fatal decree, which deprived the country of all the assistance which might be derived from the exertion of the most brilliant talents matured by experience, placed in their seats men incapable either from want of principle or of ability to exercise the sacred and important function of legislators. The new assembly consisted chiefly of country gentlemen, whose inexperience in political affairs rendered them incompetent to act for themselves, and made them the passive dupes of a party, which, though not numerous, compensated for this defect by its activity and boldness. This faction consisted of men of letters, but not of the highest rank in literature. The editors of newspapers, and the publishers of periodical libels, were, by the singular change in the affairs of France, elevated to the rank of sena-

tors, and soon assumed to themselves the authority of sovereigns. Even of this faction, however, it would be uncandid in the extreme, to consider all the members as equally unprincipled. The great majority of them were decided republicans ; but some were mere enthusiasts in this system, while the object of others was undoubtedly to gratify their private ambition, or to satiate their private revenge. In this point, however, they were all agreed, that no government but a pure democracy was adapted to the condition of free men, and that France could never be happy and flourishing till every vestige of monarchy was finally obliterated. This point they determined to enforce, and few of them, we fear, hesitated with respect to the means by which it was to be accomplished.

There is something in true religion which softens the ferocious passions of man ; it can arrest the hand of the assassin, it can whisper peace to the perturbed spirit. It rejects the attainment of its end by unlawful means, and follows rather the dictates of conscience, and immediate duty, than the most splendid visions which the imagination may form of distant perfection. This only safeguard of moral principle the republican philosophers of France unfortunately wanted ; they were even bigots in infidelity ; the throne and the altar were equally obnoxious to them ; and many of the excesses into which they plunged, may be more properly attributed to their irreligious prejudices than to any other cause.

Such was the general outline of the first legislative assembly, as it was called, though we must except from censure some respectable and independent characters, who fall properly under neither of the classes which we have described. The assembly met on the 1st of October, and the following day proceeded to the verification of their powers. On the 3d M. Pastoret was elected president, and M. M. Francois, Garron de Coulon, Cerutti, Lacepede, and Guyton-Morveau, were proclaimed secretaries. On the 4th all the members of

the assembly took the constitutional oath, in the following terms :

"I swear to maintain to the utmost of my power, the constitution of the kingdom, decreed by the constituent national assembly in the years 1789, 1790, and 1791; and neither to propose nor consent to any thing, during the continuance of this legislature, which may be injurious or contrary to it; and to be in every thing faithful to the nation, the law, and the king."

A deputation of the members was at the same time appointed to wait upon the king, to acquaint his majesty that the assembly was finally constituted.

The spirit with which the future deliberations of this assembly were to be conducted, soon began to manifest itself. On the return of the deputation to the assembly on the 5th, the reporter having stated that the king had informed them by the minister of justice, that he would receive the deputation at nine o'clock, one of the republican members adverted to a decree in the month of July 1789, which enacted that the assembly and its deputations should correspond directly with the king, and not through the medium of the ministers: that decree was therefore re-enacted, and enforced with peculiar rigour.

The king having announced that he would repair to the assembly on Friday the 12th, it was next debated in what manner he should be received. In the decree that followed this debate, the mean and trifling spirit by which the assembly was afterwards to be actuated, was clearly evinced. The moment the king entered the assembly, the members were to rise and be uncovered; but as soon as he arrived at the bar, they were to sit down and cover themselves. The king was to be seated on the *left* of the president, not on an elevated throne, but on a similar seat to that of the president. These petty indignities were as impolitic as they were undeserved, and were inconsistent with magnanimity, and utterly unbecoming a great nation.

Previous to the arrival of the king on the 7th, several deputations appeared at the bar, among the rest, one

from the commons of Paris, which renewed their protestations to maintain the constitution inviolate; the king also sent a written notice, that he had appointed M. Bertrand to be the naval minister, in the room of M. Thevenard.

Notwithstanding the jealousy which had been manifested by the assembly on the 5th, and the desire which they had since shewn of degrading the regal dignity, yet the first meeting between the king and the legislature was cordial. The excellent temper of Louis did not permit him to retain resentment, and the courtesy and affability with which he entered the hall, rendered the most inveterate republicans respectful. The king addressed the assembly in a judicious and patriotic oration. He pointed out briefly to them the nature of the duties they had undertaken to perform, and recommended some objects as requiring instant attention.—The state of the finances, he observed, was such as required strong and speedy exertion to establish an equilibrium between the receipt and the expenditure; to accelerate the assessment and collection of taxes, and to introduce an invariable order into all the departments of this immense administration. The revision of the civil code was also an object which he recommended to their care; and the simplifying the mode of proceeding so as to render the attainment of justice more easy and more prompt.

He proceeded to enlarge on the necessity of a system of national education; on the organization of the army, and the propriety of restoring order and discipline. He reserved himself to a future occasion for the communication of his sentiments concerning the navy. He stated his hopes that the nation would not be troubled by any attack from abroad; recommended, in a stile of paternal regard, unanimity and unalterable confidence between the two great branches of government, the legislative and executive powers, as he pointedly remarked that the enemies to the prosperity of the country were continually labouring to disunite them.

The speech of the king was received with unbounded applauses, and the president replied in terms of confidence and respect. He complimented the king on his appearance among the representatives of the nation, which he termed a new engagement with the country. He observed that the constitution, so far from diminishing the real power of the king, had only placed it on the firmest foundation; it had converted those into friends, who had formerly been termed subjects; and had made him the first monarch in the world. He concluded with expressing the wish of the assembly to co-operate with the benevolent views of the king, to purify the business of legislation, to re-animate public credit, to repress anarchy. "Such, sire," said he, "is our duty, such are our earnest wishes, such are yours; such are our hopes, the gratitude and blessings of the people will be our reward."

It would have been a circumstance truly fortunate for France if these sentiments had been sincere, or if this harmony had continued unbroken; but it was not merely the republican ardour of the new legislators, which revived the jealousy between the executive and legislative powers; a still more potent cause existed externally, to which we have already though slightly alluded. The hostile preparations of the emperor and the continental powers; the veil of secrecy, which they cast over their proceedings; the vague and obscure terms in which they expressed themselves, compared with the open boasts and the imprudent and intemperate declarations of the emigrant princes and nobility, contributed to excite in the minds of the people a variety of suspicions, in which all the persons connected with the court were occasionally involved.

To unravel more explicitly the cause of these fatal jealousies, and in reality of all the unfortunate circumstances which afterwards afflicted this unhappy and distracted country, it will be necessary to have a retrospect to a transaction which occurred some months previous to the period of which we are now treating, but which was then faintly known by the vague insinuation of

rumour, or by the unconnected intimations of some whose information appears to have been rather founded upon conjecture than upon competent evidence.

The meetings of great and powerful princes, like the conjunctions of the heavenly bodies, have generally been considered as ominous to the peace and happiness of the world. Towards the close of the summer of 1791, an extraordinary convention of this kind took place at Pilnitz in Saxony, between the emperor Leopold and the present king of Prussia, between whom as principals a treaty was formed, to which other powers are supposed to have afterwards acceded. The professed object of this treaty was sufficiently profligate and atrocious. It was the hostile invasion of France and the new modelling of its government. In his circular letter from Pavia of the 6th of July, the emperor had avowed a similar intention, and had invited the princes of Europe to co-operate with him in a resistance to those principles so obnoxious to arbitrary authority, which had pervaded France, and which threatened to extend over the whole face of Europe. The league of Pilnitz, however, in which the empress of Russia is also to be considered as principally concerned, is generally supposed to have had more extensive views, and to have involved projects still more offensive, if possible, to the dictates of justice, and to the peace of Europe. The partition of France as well as of Poland, or at least of a considerable portion of the territories of both, among the confederated powers, and a new modelling of the Germanic circles, are strongly suspected to have been the real principles upon which this infamous compact was founded. Dark and mysterious as the conduct of the allied courts has been, relative to the substance of the conference, the imprudence of some of the inferior agents has dropped occasional intimations which can leave little doubt of the criminality of their designs*.

* The following paper, which has since been made public, will serve to unvail this mystery of *iniquity*, and cannot be read without indignation by any friend of liberty and justice.

VOL. I.

H h

Considering, however, the convention of Pilnitz in the most favourable point of view, and accepting the explanation of its express framers, the proceeding is sufficiently unjust and absurd to warrant the most unqualified censure. If any thing on earth is sacred, it is the domestic economy of both nations and individuals. In private life the iniquity of interfering in a hostile manner in the internal state or household concerns of a neighbour, is felt and acknowledged by all mankind. Are then the rights of nations to be accounted less sacred than those of private citizens? Are the lives of millions, who must fall on both sides in such a contest, of less consequence than the poverty or anxiety of individuals. But this is not the worst; the principle,

Partition treaty between the courts in concert, concluded and signed at Pavia, in the month of July 1791.

“ His majesty the emperor will retake all that Louis XIV. conquered in the Austrian Netherlands; and uniting these provinces to the said Netherlands, will give them to his serene highness the elector palatine, so that these new possessions, added to the palatinate, may hereafter have the name of Austrasia.

“ His majesty the emperor will preserve, for ever, the property and possession of Bavaria, to make in future an indivisible mass with the domains and hereditary possessions of the house of Austria.

“ Her serene highness the archduchess Maria-Christina shall be, conjointly with his serene highness her nephew, the archduke Charles, put into hereditary possession of the duchy of Lorraine.

“ Alsace shall be restored to the empire; and the bishop of Strasbourg, as well as the chapter, shall recover their ancient privileges; and the ecclesiastical sovereigns of Germany shall do the same.

“ If the Swiss cantons consent and accede to the coalition, it may be proposed to them to annex to the Helvetic league the bishopric of Porentrui, the defiles of Franche-Compte, and even those of Tyrol, with the neighbouring bailiwicks, as well as the territory of Verfoy, which intersects the Pays de Vaud.

“ Should his majesty the king of Sardinia subscribe to the coalition; la Bresse, le Pugey, and the Pays de Gex, usurped by France from Savoy, shall be restored to him.

“ In case his Sardinian majesty can make a grand diversion, he shall be suffered to take Dauphiny, to belong to him for ever, as the nearest descendant of the ancient dauphins.

“ His majesty the king of Spain shall have Roussillon and Bearn, with the island of Corsica; and he shall take possession of the French part of St. Domingo.

if once admitted, is subversive of every right, and necessarily sanctions every crime that can be committed against society. It sanctions robbery and murder. In this view, the conquests of Alexander and of Mahomet were acts of virtue; it was criminal to resist the ambitious projects of Louis XIV; and should the empress of Russia, at any future period, discover any thing to be new modelled in the laws or constitution of Great Britain, we are bound to receive her barbarous legions, not as enemies or invaders, but as philosophic friends, who are only come to make improvements in our con-

" Her majesty the empress of all the Russias shall take upon herself the invasion of Poland, and at the same time retain Kamienieck, with that part of Padolia which borders on Moldavia.

" His majesty the emperor shall oblige the Porte to give up Choczim, as well as the small forts of Servia, and those on the river Lurna

" His majesty the king of Prussia, by means of the above-mentioned invasion of the empress of all the Russias into Poland, shall make an acquisition of Thorn and Dantzic, and there unite the Palatinate on the east to the confines of Silesia.

" His majesty the king of Prussia shall besides acquire Luface, and his serene highness the elector of Saxony shall in exchange receive the rest of Poland, and occupy the throne as hereditary sovereign.

" His majesty the present king of Poland shall abdicate the throne, on receiving a suitable annuity.

" His royal highness the elector of Saxony shall give his daughter in marriage to his serene highness, the youngest son of his royal highness the grand duke of all the Russias, who will be the father of the hereditary kings of Poland and Lithuania.

(Signed)

" LEOPOLD,

" PRINCE NASSAU,

" COUNT FLORIDA BLANCA,

" BISCHOFFSWERDER."

" The king of England is said to have acceded to this treaty in March 1792. And Holland to have acceded afterwards, provided the arrangements respecting their limits with his imperial majesty should be made according to the desire of the Dutch republic before the partition.

" Spain renounced it when count d'Aranda came into office as minister, giving assurances, however, of the strictest neutrality."

dition, and benevolently to present us with that most inestimable of blessings, a despotic government.

France, at the moment when this royal banditti were plotting against her peace, might be said literally to be in a state of internal tranquillity. There existed parties in the nation, it is true, as must exist in every country which is newly agitated with the spirit of freedom: a large portion of her citizens might indeed be desirous of a republican government; but a still larger portion were attached to their king, and contented with the constitution which was then established. If these contracting powers were really well-wishers to the unfortunate Louis, they should have considered that plots and conspiracies only prosper in times of tumult and confusion; that the bad citizens have need of war, of internal or external distress, to accomplish their purposes; that weakened as the executive power was by the new constitution, it is in times of peace and tranquillity, it is when the people feel themselves happy, prosperous, and indolent, that the monarchical authority recovers its sway; and that there still remained an immense civil list, and a considerable patronage, which afforded a prospect of influence to the monarch.

But we cannot, in justice, attribute the conduct of these powers to any principle of benevolence, generosity, or humanity. The man who sets no value on the lives or the happiness of his own subjects, but will squander them even to achieve a degree of lost authority, or any temporal advantage for an individual, cannot be endued with any share of accuracy in moral arithmetic, cannot have the most liberal notions of virtue, cannot be supposed to act upon the broadest and most rational principles. Besides, if we observe the conduct of these princes with respect to Poland, it will afford the fairest comment on their motives with respect to France. It was not the cause of Louis, it was not entirely the cause of kings that influenced their determinations. They felt almost as little for Louis, as for his subjects; for if indeed they had properly estimated the probable consequences, they must have foreseen that

these measures could only operate to his destruction, however unfavourably the contest might terminate for the French revolution. *He* must be overwhelmed in the storm whatever party might prevail ; but that was a matter of small concern when put in competition with the private views and ambitious projects of arbitrary princes.

The convention of Pilnitz, as we have intimated, was not unknown in France, though the full extent of the terms and conditions of the treaty was but imperfectly understood. It was impossible then in the nature of things that it could be known, that a concert of princes was formed for the express purpose of invading the country, of overturning the constitution, of re-establishing despotic authority, and that the minds of the people should not be agitated with fears and with suspicions. It was next to impossible, that a part of these suspicions should not fall upon the court. The queen in particular had never been popular, and ever since the revolution, candour obliges us to confess, that upon the best inquiry we do not find her conduct to have been guarded with that strictness of prudence and reserve which the circumstances of the times required. The fatal flight of the king could not be eradicated from the minds of the people, and the imprudent proclamation of Bouillé could not be recollected without resentment and apprehension. The republican party, and the enemies of order and government, eagerly took advantage of these circumstances ; the atrocity of the monarchical combination was magnified, and the whole was laid to the charge of the court and of Louis. The first movements of dissatisfaction were directed against the ministers, and to unsettle and dismiss the servants of the state in rapid succession, was the most certain means of disorganizing the government.

Such we apprehend to have been nearly the state of parties, at the period of which we are now treating.

The perturbed state of the public mind was manifested in the assembly even so early as in the evening session of the 8th of October, when the ministers were in-

troduced into the assembly to render an account of their proceedings. On M. Montmorin being questioned with respect to the intercourse maintained with foreign powers, he replied, that the intercourse with other nations had ceased during the suspension of the royal authority, and had only recommenced from the king's acceptance of the constitution. "I move," said M. Lacroix, with that impetuosity which distinguishes the nation, "that the minister for foreign affairs be obliged to answer more pointedly. However the royal functions may have been suspended, have we ceased to maintain ambassadors at these courts? These ambassadors must have been acquainted with whatever occurs at their respective courts, and they ought to have informed the minister."—"It is this correspondence, added he, which I wish to be laid open." After some altercation, a series of interrogatories was put to M. Montmorin, and the substance of his replies went to establish his former proposition, that the intercourse with foreign courts having ceased for a time, he had nothing official or satisfactory to produce on that subject; that the correspondence alluded to contained nothing but vague and unsupported rumours, which it would be even dangerous to reveal; and that when any thing of certainty occurred, he would not fail to communicate it.

The subject was renewed on the succeeding day, and a decree was passed, ordering that the ministers should be obliged to inform the assembly concerning the state and arms of the national guards destined for the frontiers; concerning the motives for retarding the national Gendarmerie; concerning the neglect in replacing those officers in the troops of the line, who had deserted their corps; concerning the delay in sending arms to the departments of the Haute-Loire, the Haute-Vienne, the Haute-Rhin, &c.; concerning the slowness of the recruiting service, the want of provisions in the frontier places, and the neglect in providing arms, &c. On the 11th the minister at war read a long *memoire* on the actual state of his department, and he cleared up

the doubtful points so much to the satisfaction of the assembly that his memoir was ordered to be printed.

In the mean time the emigrants still continued to assemble in considerable bodies upon the frontiers, and the brothers of the king to issue hostile proclamations. It became necessary therefore to pursue more vigorous measures, and to take some immediate steps to repel the approaching danger. The first measure which the assembly thought proper to employ on this occasion respected the right of Monsieur to the regency, in case of the death of the king; and, after some deliberation, the assembly passed a decree nearly in the following terms:

“The national assembly, considering that Louis Stanislaus Xavier, French prince, being the next in succession to the regency, is absent from the kingdom—In virtue of an article in the second section of the French constitution, decrees that the said Louis Stanislaus Xavier, French prince, is required to return to the kingdom within the space of two months from the day in which the proclamation of the legislative body shall have been published in Paris.

“In case the said L. S. Xavier, French prince, shall fail to return to the kingdom within the period above signified, he shall then be deemed to have forfeited his right to the regency, in virtue of the second article of the constitutional act. The assembly further decrees, that, conformably to the decree of the 30th of this month (October), a proclamation to this effect shall be printed, affixed, and published, within three days in the city of Paris, and that the executive power shall notify the same to the assembly within the three following days.”

On the day on which this decree was passed, the public mind was greatly relieved by the report of M. Montmorin, the minister of foreign affairs.—It stated, at large, the reasons which induced him to hope for a continuance of the general tranquillity, and contained the answers of the several courts to the general notification from the king, of his acceptance of the new con-

situation. The replies from even the most hostile of the combined powers were in flattering terms; the emperor and the king of Prussia in particular gave the most lavish assurances of their amicable intentions; and the elector of Mentz alone had the honesty to avow his disapprobation of the state of affairs in France.

The minister next stated the measures taken by the king with respect to the countenance given to the emigrants by foreign powers. The Austrian Netherlands principally attracted attention; and, on application to the emperor, the most peremptory orders he said had been given, to prevent them from collecting in too great numbers in any one place, from appearing in military array, or being supplied with any of the implements of war.

Such were the professions of kings and courtiers, while some of them, at the very moment, were pursuing the most hostile measures, and actually studying to find excuses for commencing a war; while the league of Pilnitz existed in its full vigour; and while the disaffected Frenchmen were privately encouraged by the emperor, the king of Prussia, and their adherents, to assemble in formidable bodies on the frontiers, and to form the most fatal arrangements.

Notwithstanding this was the actual state of affairs, the crafty Leopold, impressed perhaps with some degree of apprehension, from the spirit and enthusiasm manifested by the French nation, or considering the plot as not yet matured for execution, still continued to temporize. Agreeably to the intimation of the minister, he issued a proclamation, forbidding the emigrants to assemble in warlike array in the Austrian Netherlands; to prohibit their appearing in military uniforms, their engaging recruits, and still more their encouraging deserters from the French troops. How far this proclamation was complied with, in the spirit as well as in the letter, the succeeding events sufficiently testified.

While the emperor was thus clandestinely making preparations against the French nation, the northern

powers were more open and decided in their measures: Prussia, Sweden, and Russia, entered into strict engagements for the restoration of the old despotism of France. Denmark was strongly solicited to enter into the alliance; but, with a degree of prudence which has always characterised the present administration of that country, the proposal was declined. The emperor did not openly and avowedly enter into this new confederacy; whether his inclinations, which seem to have been always pacific, really indisposed him to precipitate measures, or whether it suited that duplicity with which his character was so remarkably shaded, it is impossible at present to determine; but, by the convention of Stockholm, it was determined that he should be apparently forced into the war, by the empress insisting on his fulfilling the terms of the alliance which existed between the imperial crowns.

Thus menaced on every side, and unable to conjecture from what quarter the first fatal blow was to proceed, some allowance may be made for those unhappy jealousies which the nation entertained, and for those severe measures towards the emigrants which they were about to adopt. Tremblingly alive on every topic that affected their newly recovered liberties, not knowing whom to suspect, or whom to consider as their friend, this unfortunate people naturally became the dupes of that faction which made the most lavish professions in favour of popular liberty, and directed their resentments, possibly without any good reason, against those whose interest they conceived to be most concerned their oppression—the king and his ministers.

The constituent assembly had treated with unexampled lenity the hostile proceedings of the emigrants, but at this crisis measures more vigorous and more severe were perhaps required. On the 9th of November, therefore, a decree was passed, stating,—“That the French who were assembled in a hostile manner beyond the frontiers, were suspected of a conspiracy against their country.—That, if after the 1st of January they should be found in that situation, they should be decla-

red actually guilty of a conspiracy, and punishable with death.—That all the French princes and public functionaries, who should not return before the 1st of January, should be adjudged guilty of the same crime.—That the high national court should immediately after that period be called to pronounce judgment on such offenders.—That such as should be convicted during their absence, should forfeit their estates and property during their own lives, but not to the prejudice of their children.—That all such persons holding offices, &c. should be adjudged to have forfeited the same; and all such being officers in the army or navy should be considered as deserters.—All Frenchmen who enlisted men to attack the frontiers were to be judged guilty of high treason.—No arms or military stores were to be transported out of the kingdom.”

This decree was immediately followed by another, ordering the vacancies in the army to be filled up without further loss of time. Supplies were voted for putting the kingdom in a respectable posture of defence; and some regulations were adopted concerning the military schools, and the organization of the army.

The party disaffected to the new constitution were furnished with fresh matter for murmur and complaint by the refusal of the king to sanction the decree of the 9th of November against the emigrants. The moderate party exulted in this testimony of his constitutional freedom exhibited by the monarch, and considered it as a proof that he intended to govern strictly agreeably to the principles of the constitution. A king, they observed, who was not sincere in his attachment to the new order of things, would have borne the mask of dissimulation through the whole of his conduct; such a one would not have hazarded an unpopular step, but would have ostensibly joined in the most violent measures, in the hope that they could not long endure, and that the machinations of the enemies of freedom would soon restore the ancient depravity and abuses.

While such were the sentiments of the more moderate and reasonable part of the nation, the republican

faction eagerly embraced the opportunity to declaim against the new constitution, and against monarchical government. It was a constitution, they asserted, composed of inconsistent and incongruous principles, an hereditary monarch, and a democratic assembly. This very prerogative of a veto, which the constitution had conferred upon the king, would be the means, it was urged, of defeating every patriotic measure of the legislature, while the immense civil list enabled him either to bribe its members, or to cherish and assist the enemies of the nation assembled in foreign countries.

The exercise of the royal veto on this occasion was certainly an imprudent step, though there is no reason to attribute it to any perfidious motive, or to account for it on any other principle than that gentleness of disposition, that tenderness of character, by which this unfortunate monarch was so much distinguished. To deprive at one blow, and by his own agency, his nearest connexions of their hereditary rights, of their revenues, their subsistence, and to subject them to the penalties of death for their mistaken zeal, while they professed that all their efforts were directed to his service, doubtless appeared to him a harsh and ungrateful measure; while, judging probably of their dispositions by his own, he flattered himself with the hopes of persuading them to abandon their project, and no longer contumaciously to oppose themselves to what appeared almost the unanimous sentiment of the whole nation. In contemplating the history of this amiable and unfortunate prince, and the dreadful catastrophe which has since taken place, our sorrow is rather increased than diminished by the melancholy reflection, that he was less the victim of the cruelty of his enemies, than of the imprudence and folly of his professed friends. If, instead of deserting their country and their king, the misguided nobility of France had only for the time conformed a little to circumstances, contented themselves for the moment with that share of dignity and authority which they could save out of the general wreck of privileges, and rallied round the throne to support

their king in the exercise of his constitutional rights—could they have conceded with grace, and defended themselves with candour and moderation—had they only assumed the appearance of acting more for the public, and less for themselves, France would never have been the victim of anarchy; the nobility would still have preserved, if not their titles, at least their fortunes and their consequence; and their innocent monarch would never have fallen a sacrifice to a relentless mob.

Above all things, it is ever impolitic to call in foreign aid to extinguish the internal troubles of a nation. It is rarely successful; and when it is successful, the end is generally, that both parties are equally the prey of the invader. A high-spirited nation will seldom endure the insult; and the consequence has frequently been, that the contending parties, when languishing under the oppression of a foreign yoke, have forgotten their mutual animosities to unite against the common enemy, and to expel from the country that banditti, which their dissensions had before introduced. Had the confederated powers been successful in their efforts against France, there is little doubt that the very persons who invited them to the contest, would have been among the first to complain of their tyranny and injustice; and, singular as the thought may appear, we shall not be surprised to find, in the vicissitudes of war, some of the first emigrants who fled their country, because they could not endure a limited monarchy, contending under the banners of the republic for the democracy of France.

Independent of the factions which distracted the councils and divided the sentiments of the nation, the internal state of France was far from prosperous at the close of the year 1791. The public treasury was exhausted, and the revenue was still inadequate to the expenditure. The assignats still circulated under a considerable discount. Poverty pervaded the country; and the neglect of agriculture threatened an impending famine. Distressing as was this state of affairs in the

mother country, that of the colonies was still worse. The island of St. Domingo in particular was still convulsed by the dreadful contest, in which the impracticability of the white inhabitants in refusing the just demands of the people of colour had involved the island. The negro slaves, taking advantage of the anarchy which ensued from this unfortunate conflict, embraced eagerly the opportunity to emancipate themselves. In the northern district, not less than *one hundred thousand* revolted. More than two hundred plantations were entirely burnt; the masters were massacred; and if the women were spared, it was to endure a captivity worse than death. The ships that were anchored off the island afforded the only asylum to which the unhappy fugitives could resort, while fire and devastation every where marked the path of the victorious rebels. Such was the representation of the colonial assembly: on the 30th of October the minister of marine announced to the national assembly, that two thousand three hundred troops of the line had been sent thither, and this embarkation was immediately followed by that of six hundred more: 10,370,912 livres were voted as a supply for these expeditions; and these public efforts were nobly seconded by the patriotic offers of an individual. M. Mosneron of Nantz, on the 3d of November, made a spontaneous proposal to the national assembly to equip a vessel entirely new, and to transport, at his own expence, a body of four hundred men to assist in restoring peace to the distracted colonies. The assembly, at the time they accepted the offer of M. Mosneron, passed a decree of thanks to the king of Great Britain, to the English nation, and to lord Esfingham, the governor of Jamaica, for his generous conduct in relieving the planters of St. Domingo from the horrors of famine, and in furnishing them with arms and military stores against the rebel negroes.

Among the calamities which at this period afflicted France, perhaps not the least to be deplored were the dissensions which were likely to ensue from the influence of the ejected and non-juring clergy. The mea-

tures of the constituent assembly, respecting ecclesiastical affairs, have already been censured as being consistent with neither justice nor policy. It was not consistent with justice to alienate property from its legal destination; still less laudable was it to wrest from the hands of the possessors that revenue which had been legally committed to them, and to reduce to comparative indigence those who had long been in the habits of opulence and ease. The hardships and difficulties of the clergy were increased by the bigoted spirit of the court of Rome: the Pope had prohibited them under the most alarming anathemas from conforming to the injunctions of the assembly, and from taking the civic oath. One false step necessarily leads to another; injustice always produces injustice. The decree which enjoined the civic oath was followed by another, which expelled from their benefices all whose consciences could not submit to the terms prescribed by the legislature, all whose attachment to the see of Rome was still preserved inviolate, all who from virtue, as well as from less laudable motives, felt an aversion to the new order of things. Thus, at the period of which we are treating, there remained in the heart of France an immense body of disaffected persons, united among themselves, connected with a foreign hierarchy, which itself was irritated by recent injuries in the affair of Avignon; and to complete the distraction, this body was possessed of an influence over the minds of the people, which it was not easy to suppress. The non-juring clergy were possessed of all the popularity, of all the credit of the order. Their chapels were crowded, while those of the constitutional or conforming clergy were utterly deserted. We are not therefore to suppose that this influence would be entirely without its effects; we are not to suppose that such an accumulation of power in the hands of men would not be employed to the gratification of their resentments. In some places the disaffected priests openly declaimed against the constitution; in others secret conspiracies were formed, foreign correspondences were established, and no means were left untried

to inflame the minds of the populace. Every engine of superstition was employed, every art of eloquence essayed, to seduce them from their allegiance. Nocturnal meetings were held, and nocturnal processions were conducted by the factious priests. The shrines of the virgin and of the saints were dressed in mourning, as if to indicate the projected overthrow of all religion. The contest in fine arrived at length at such extremity, that actual combats took place between the fanatical adherents of the ejected priests and the national guard. The remote parts of the kingdom were nearly engaged in a religious war, and the sanguinary scenes of St. Bartholomew were on the point of being renewed.

No measure has drawn more odium upon the legislative assembly, and none has excited more the indignation of other nations, than that severe decree which banished for ever from their country, on pain of death, the non-juring clergy. Much as we deplore the harshness of the measure; much as we sympathize in the sufferings of that body; innocent and respectable as we believe a considerable portion of them to have been; still justice obliges us to confess, that this measure, harsh as it was, appeared only a necessary consequence of those which had preceded it. It was the rash and impolitic proceeding of the constituent assembly, in hastily confiscating the property of the church, that unfortunately implanted the seeds of discord between the religion and the legislature of the country. The enlightened part of the community might see the error with regret, but they saw it only when it was too late to rectify it.

The first step of the legislative assembly against the refractory priests, was however less violent in appearance, though in reality it was fraught with severity. On the 18th of November a series of resolutions were passed, by which it was enacted, that the pensions of the ejected clergy, which had been allowed by the constituent assembly, should be withdrawn from all such as still refused the civic oath. That wherever any troubles

were found to exist, of which religion was the cause of the pretext, the municipal officers should have liberty to remove from the neighbourhood such of the non-juring clergy as might be suspected of fomenting or favouring such seditions; that in case of disobedience to the directory of the department, they might be prosecuted before the tribunals, and imprisoned; and that those who should be convicted of actual sedition should be liable to two years imprisonment. To these decrees, after some delay, the king, from apparently the most humane and conscientious motives, opposed his *veto*, and thus unfortunately increased the clamour which was insidiously excited against him in every part of the kingdom.

If the general tenor of the replies from foreign courts to the king's notice of having accepted the constitution be attentively considered, it will be impossible not to observe that remarkable strain of artifice and duplicity which pervaded the majority of them, and particularly those from the most powerful states, and those nearest in alliance with the reigning family. They contained, indeed, expressions of personal respect and sympathy for the king, but nothing which could be construed into an approbation of the new order which had been established in France by the prevalence of popular councils. However therefore the court and ministry might appear satisfied with these empty professions, it is certain they were far from gratifying to the people at large. Instead of diminishing, the insolence of the emigrants appeared to increase. The enrolments in the circles of the Upper and Lower Rhine were carried on with increased vigour and alacrity; they were even encouraged to commit acts of violence on the bordering territories of the bishopric of Strasburgh; and an attempt was also made by an agent of the princes to corrupt general Wimpfen, who commanded in the department of the Upper Rhine, and to engage him to deliver by treachery the fortress of New Brisac into their hands, by which the hostile troops might have obtained an easy entrance into the territories of France. Impelled by

these circumstances the assembly decreed, on the 29th of November, that a deputation of twenty-four of its members should wait upon the king to communicate to him, on the part of the assembly, its solicitude concerning the dangers which menaced the country from the perfidious combinations of armed emigrants, assembled without the kingdom, and the fatal conspiracies which they apprehended internally threatened its domestic peace; to entreat him to require the elector of Treves, of Mayence, and the other princes of the empire, to issue a prohibition to those hostile preparations and enrolments which were openly carried on by the emigrants on the frontiers; and to request that he would embody a force sufficient to compel them, in case of a refusal.

On the 14th of December the king repaired in person to the national assembly; he acquainted them, that he had taken their message into deep consideration, and that on so important an occasion he had thought it his duty to be himself the bearer of the answer. He observed, that he had long been of opinion, that the circumstances of the nation required great circumspection. He assured them that he had done every thing to recall the emigrants to the bosom of their country, and to persuade them to submit to the new laws. He had employed both amicable intimations, and caused formal requisitions to be made, to divert the neighbouring princes from giving them a support calculated to flatter their hopes and encourage them in their rash designs.

He observed, that the emperor had done all that could be expected from a faithful ally, by forbidding and dispersing all assemblages within his states. His measures at other courts, he said, had not been equally successful, and unaccommodating answers had been given to his just requisitions. These unjust refusals, he observed, called for resolutions of another kind. As the representative of the people, he felt for their injuries. In consequence, he had caused a declaration to be made to the elector of Treves, that if before the 15th

of January he did not put a stop within his states to all hostile dispositions on the part of the emigrants, he should be obliged to consider him as the enemy of France. The king added, that he should order similar declarations to all who favoured assemblages which might menace the peace of the kingdom.

To enable the nation, however, to prepare for that war in which they might find it necessary, after all these precautions, reluctantly to engage, the king advised an attention to the finances of the country, and the strict observance of peace and unanimity. He modestly alluded to the violence of those who endeavoured to surround with disgusts the exercise of that authority which was entrusted to him—pledged himself faithfully to preserve the deposit of the constitution, and to shew to all mankind that he felt how truly glorious it was to be the king of a free people.

In the former part of this discourse, where the king speaks of having employed amicable intimations, and exerted his personal influence with foreign powers, he might allude to a circumstance which has only been publicly known since his death: So early as the month of March 1791, the emperor Leopold had formed at Mantua a secret plan, consisting of twenty-one articles, the object of which was to re-establish the king in all his former authority: for this purpose the emperor was to enter France, in the month of July, at the head of all his troops, while the frontiers were left totally defenceless. The king prevented by his interposition this plan, and probably might induce the emperor to assume at least that mask of moderation and friendship which for some time he affected to wear.

But however sincere the king might be in his declarations, he was not fortunate enough to silence the voice of faction. The republican party in particular did not fail to take every advantage which the fears and suspicions of the people afforded to excite their detestation of the court, and of the little remains of the aristocratic faction which existed in the kingdom. The negative which the king had unfortunately affixed to the

decree against the emigrants, and his tardiness in sanctioning that respecting the non-juring clergy, afforded the disaffected and designing too easy a pretext to work on the passions of the multitude. Addresses crowded in from every part of the kingdom, abounding in commendations of the national assembly, and indicating their dissatisfaction as to the conduct of the king and his ministers. Most of these addresses were entered on the journals of the assembly, and were seconded by inflammatory speeches from the more violent members. M. Montmorin, unable to withstand the storm of popular violence, resigned; M. Delessart was nominated to the department of foreign affairs, and M. Cahier de Gerville to that of the interior. In the beginning of December, also, M. du Portail was dismissed from his office as minister of war, and M. Narbonne appointed in his room. The hasty dismissal and impeachment of ministers in consequence of inflammatory harangues from popular orators, and without any hearing or investigation, may be accounted among the principal causes of the calamities of France. The rapid succession of ministers allowed them no time to remedy abuses, or to make the necessary arrangements for the defence of the kingdom; the fear of impeachment rendered them cautious and timid, and directed their attention rather to the arts of acquiring popularity, than to the performance of their duty; rather to intriguing with the despicable journalists, who governed the mob of Paris, than to the actual service of their king and country.

Before the conclusion of the month of November, a circumstance occurred which served to put in motion the two parties which were shortly to divide the kingdom, the constitutionalists and the republicans; and the event might have shewn in whose favour the balance was likely to preponderate. The mayoralty of the judicious and patriotic M. Bailly terminated in the month of November—The once popular La Fayette appeared as a candidate to succeed him, and it was generally understood that he was supported by the court—He was however opposed by a violent Jacobin and a declared

republican, M. Petion. It is almost unnecessary to state the issue of the contest, and to add that M. Petion was elected mayor of Paris by a great majority.

As melancholy experience had evinced the increasing credit and power of the Jacobins; as it was evident that, by gaining an ascendancy over the minds of the populace, that pernicious society was enabled to controul even the assembly itself; as the only means of averting the dreadful consequences with which the nation was threatened by the disorganizing principles avowed by the leaders of that club, the friends of the constitution and of the monarch endeavoured to counteract its influence, by a new institution of a similar kind, but professing principles more moderate, and consequently more calculated to preserve the tranquillity and happiness of the nation. As the new society assembled in the vacant convent of the Feuillans, it received its name, as well as the Jacobin club, from the place of its meeting. It was composed of the most active and most respectable members of the constituent assembly, among whom were M. M. d'Andre, Barnave, the Lameths, Du Port, Rabaud, Sieyes, Chapelier, Thouret, Labord, Taleyrand, Montesquieu, Beaumetz, &c. to these may be added two hundred and sixty-six members of the existing assembly, and about eight hundred and eighty other respectable citizens.

The republican party and the Jacobins could not behold this new association without secret disquiet. It was evidently formed to disconcert their conspiracies, and to open the eyes of the public to their true interest. As they despaired of vanquishing it by the force of reason and truth, they determined to employ that blind and desperate instrument, the sole guidance of which they had long been labouring to acquire. The first alarm was on the 21st of December, when a large body of ruffians armed with clubs forced themselves into the hall of the Feuillans; they commenced with direct threats to several of the members, with interrupting all discussion, and at length openly acknowledged that

they were sent thither to effect the dissolution of the society.

A riot of a still more serious nature was threatened on the 23d, and M. Charon the president wrote to the mayor to request that a commissaire de police might be ordered to attend the meeting, for the purpose of preserving the peace; but M. Petion, who was indebted for his own elevation to the Jacobin club, could not be supposed to be extremely ardent in favour of its rival. He excused himself, by saying that he could not command the attendance of a commissaire, but that he would take every precaution in his power. At the instance of the commander of the national guard, however, M. Petion wrote to the commissaire de police, and requested his attendance. As the members of the society came armed as well as the rioters, a tumult of a very sanguinary nature was expected; but happily, by the interposition of the municipal officer, a massacre was prevented. The rioters imperiously insisted on the dissolution of the club, and this by the other party was contemptuously refused. On the exhortation of the peace officer, however, to separate and depart from the scene of altercation, the society afforded the first example of moderation, by quitting its hall, and leaving their property to the discretion of their opponents.

The majority of the assembly had, from these circumstances, an immediate opportunity of manifesting its disposition towards the new institution. The vicinity of their place of meeting to that of the legislative body, and the various committees, afforded M. Merlin (who had been imprudently attacked by one of the guards) and others of the Jacobin faction, a ready excuse for insisting on their removal; and a motion being made to that effect, it was unanimously decreed. Thus was victory at once declared in favour of the Jacobins, and success by such unworthy means only served to encourage them to more atrocious proceedings. The constitutional party indeed were too late in their adoption of active measures. Their more diligent adversaries had already obtained possession of the public mind,

and they entered the field only when the contest was virtually decided.

These transactions afford a tolerably accurate picture of the state of parties in France, at the conclusion of the year 1791. Its situation, with respect to foreign powers, became every day more and more critical. The conduct of Leopold was a singular tissue of inconsistency and deception. He pretended formally to revoke the circular of Pavia, in consequence of the king's acceptance of the constitution, and yet exhorted the powers of Europe not to desist from the measures concerted between them, but to continue vigilant, and to declare that their coalition had still an existence. This declaration was followed by a letter to the king of France, reviving the claims of the imperial vassals in Alsace and Lorraine; insisting that no compensation could be accepted, but that matters should be restored in every respect to their ancient situation; and acquainting the king that the emperor conceived himself not only bound to interpose by solemn protestation, "but also to give to the injured *all the aid* which the dignity of the imperial court, and the maintenance of the present constitution, required."

While such were the pretences of Leopold, it appeared that the German princes, in general, were more than satisfied with the mode of compensation proposed by the French. The prince of Lowestein readily accepted of an indemnification, and the prince of Hohenloë, and the prince of Salm-Salm, declared themselves equally ready to treat upon the same terms. The dukes of Wirtemberg, and Deux-Ponts, as well as prince Maximilian, freely negotiated, and only required, what in itself was no more than perfectly reasonable, the reimbursement of their revenues on the feudal rights in question, from the 4th of August 1789.

The designs of Leopold gradually unfolded. The declaration to the European powers, the substance of which is given in a preceding paragraph, was dated the 10th November, the letter to the king the 3d of December; and on the 21st of the same month an official

notice was delivered to the French minister at Vienna, in answer to the French king's notification to the elector of Treves, which more directly manifested the hostile intentions of the imperial court. It stated, that the elector had given notice to the court of Vienna, that he had adopted, with respect to the French refugees and emigrants, the same principles and regulations as had been put in force in the Austrian Low countries; that notwithstanding this, the elector was still apprehensive that the tranquillity of his frontiers and states would be disturbed by France; and that in consequence of this notification, the emperor had been constrained to order marshal Bender to march to the states of his electoral highness speedy and effectual succours, in case he should be attacked with hostile incursions, or even imminently menaced with such.

As it was a well-known fact that the French emigrants were assembled in immense force, and with every hostile preparation, in the electorate; as such an arrangement could not be with amicable intentions towards their country; and as the emperor, by this official notice, declared his intentions of protecting the elector in these proceedings, his views with respect to France could be no longer mistaken. In the letter which the French king transmitted to the assembly, inclosing the notice of the court of Vienna, he expressed his astonishment not less than his regret. He conceived that he had a right to reckon on the good intentions of the emperor, and added, that he could not yet believe that his dispositions were changed, but wished to persuade himself that the court of Vienna had been deceived respecting the state of facts, and had been made to suppose that the elector of Treves had fulfilled in reality all the duties of justice and good neighbourhood. In the answer which the king returned to the emperor, he said, he had reminded that monarch that nothing was demanded of him, but what France had afforded an example of, and that the French nation had taken immediate care to prevent the hostile assembling of the refugees from Brabant, when they attempted it in the neighbour-

hood of the Austrian Netherlands; at the same time he confirmed his former declaration, that if, after the period already fixed, the elector of Treves should not have really and effectually dispersed the hostile assemblages which existed in his states, nothing would prevent the king from proposing to the nation to employ the force of arms to constrain it.

As the intentions of Leopold therefore could be no longer doubted, the préparations for war were renewed with redoubled vigour. By an act of the legislature, the king had previously been requested to confer on M. M. Rochambeau and Luckner the dignity of marshals of France, and M. la Fayette had proceeded to assume an important command on the confines of Germany. The war minister, M. Narbonne, made the circuit of the frontiers to inspect personally the state of the army there. New levies were immediately ordered, and the whole country assumed the garb of war.

Though the spirit of the nation was not depressed by the prospect of impending hostilities, still, if the state of the finances be considered, war could not be contemplated without the most serious apprehensions. The extraordinary resources had all proved hitherto inadequate to the liquidation of the public debt. On the 29th of December, twenty millions of livres were voted by the assembly, which the minister at war informed them, on the succeeding day, must be all appropriated to the deficit of 1791, and not to the expences of 1792.

M. Lafond on the same day presented a general estimate, from the particular estimates of the several ministers, of the expences of 1792;

			Livres.
Appanage of the princes	....	..	5,000,000
Army	....	...	221,000
Foreign affairs	....	....	6,000,000
Marine and colonies	....	....	43,000,000
General administration	....	....	5,000,000
Public worship	....	....	81,000,000
Pensions to ecclesiastics	....	....	68,000,000

National assembly	...	...	5,000,000
Civil list	....	....	25,000,000
Bridges and roads	....	....	4,000,000
High national court and court of appeal	....	....	450,000
Schools and academies	....	....	1,000,000
Interest of public debt	....	....	20,000,000
Life annuities	....	....	100,000,000
Perpetual annuities	....	....	300,000,000

Total 663,671,000

He then presented an estimate of the ordinary ways and means; consisting of land-tax, tax on personal property, patents, stamps, &c. taken at 530,000,000: The remaining sum of 133,671,000 was to be provided for from the fund of extraordinaries.

Notwithstanding previous appearances, the year 1792 opened with fair but delusive omens to the peace of Europe and the liberties of France. Leopold again wavered or prevaricated: Unprepared for the attack, or confident that his deep and sinister policy would be successful in amusing the assembly, his language to the French ministers at Vienna and Brussels was contradictory to his former public declarations; indeed, contrary to his actual conduct, it was pacific and conciliatory: thus, while a cordon of troops was gradually forming on the frontier of the Netherlands, the solemn protestations of the emperor asserted them to be intended merely for the purpose of precaution and defence. M. de Sainte Croix, who had been dispatched as an envoy extraordinary to the elector of Treves, was received by that prince with the most perfect cordiality and respect. The emigrants were prohibited from continuing their military exercises, and the elector pledged himself by the strongest assurances to the French minister, that within eight days the hostile assemblages in his dominions should be entirely dispersed. All military stores and even horses for the emigrants were prohibited; and he declared, that in every respect it was his most ardent wish to maintain perpetual peace and amity with France.

The people, more sincere than their sovereigns, willingly seconded this disposition. In many towns the emigrants were ignominiously expelled by the populace; and the prince of Condé was compelled by the magistrates of Worms to leave that city for fear of insurrection. While their enemies thus appeared to be crushed or removed, the apprehensions of the French for their own frontier were completely dispelled by the report of the war minister on his return from his tour. The fortresses were represented as being in a most respectable state, and the patriotism of the soldiery exceeded every expectation that the most sanguine friend of his country could form. The credit of the paper currency experienced an immediate rise from these favourable appearances; and manufactures and agriculture began once more to flourish. The accounts from the colonies were less encouraging. The dreadful revolt of the negroes at cape François had indeed produced a temporary cessation of the dissensions which existed between the white inhabitants of St. Domingo and the people of colour; and an actual concordat, or agreement, had been entered into by the two parties. The successes of the free inhabitants thus united against the revolted negroes were brilliant; but every new instance of success but added to the calamity of individuals, as it was a destruction of property. It affords matter for astonishment, that the most severe calamities are frequently insufficient to destroy the force of prejudice. That rancorous spirit which prevailed in the white colonists, that contempt in which they continued to hold the people of colour, was repressed, but not extinguished, by the concordat. While the ratification of this contract was still in agitation, a private quarrel served once more to rekindle the flames of civil war. On the 16th of November, the sections of Port au Prince were assembled for the purpose of deliberating on the execution of the concordat, and the forming of a new provincial assembly, to which the people of colour should have equal admission with the white inhabitants. At the very moment in which

this important question was in agitation, a free negro quarrelled with a white cannonier. The soldier drew his sword; but the superior force of the negro wrested it from him, and broke it in pieces. For this offence the negro was apprehended; he was immediately tried, condemned, and hanged, in opposition to the most urgent and humble entreaties of the people of colour, who only requested that the execution of the sentence might at least be suspended.

The consequence of this hasty and imprudent act was, that the people of colour fired on the cannoniers; the white colonists flew instantly to arms, and the contest was renewed with all its former fury. The succeeding day the town of Port au Prince was set on fire by some unknown incendiaries, and twenty eight islets, making two-fifths of the whole, were totally consumed. The subsequent history of this distracted colony is nothing but a repetition of crimes and disasters. The island, divided into three parties, has continued a prey to its intestine divisions. The revolted negroes have still maintained their ground. The people of colour have either remained undecided and inactive, or have taken the part of the insurgents. Even the troops which were sent over to restore tranquillity, have in some measure been corrupted, while the white inhabitants have displayed unequivocal marks of counter-revolutionary principles.

As but little hope appeared of the emigrants returning to their country, and as the veto of the king had caused much discontent in the nation, the assembly proceeded to stronger measures, and a decree of accusation of high treason was passed against the brothers of the king, the prince of Condé, M. Calonne, and Mirabeau the younger; and as, notwithstanding the professions of the emperor, reports had gone forth that a congress was to be formed by Austria and Prussia for the purpose of subverting, or modifying at least, the French constitution, a decree was passed by the legislature, and immediately sanctioned by the king, which pronounced every Frenchman infamous, and guilty of

high treason, who should directly or indirectly take any part in such measures, or who should, in any respect, unite with those whose object was a modification of the existing constitution.

The principal misfortune, however, that afflicted France, at this juncture, was the parties which existed within its bosom, and which precipitated rapidly one after another the ministers from their stations. M. Delessart was accused, and M. Bertrand declared by a vote of the assembly unworthy of being employed. While the republican party were thus obtaining a gradual ascendancy in the assembly, and taking advantage of every circumstance that could increase their power, the more desperate among them were insidiously employed in dispersing rumours among the people, atrociously slanderous of the king and the existing government. Pikes were openly manufactured in different parts of the city, and avowedly distributed among the populace, under the specious pretext of arming them against the enemies of liberty. On the 17th of February, therefore, the king thought it necessary expressly to deny, in a spirited letter to the mayor and municipality, all the charges which were circulated against him, relative to his supposed disaffection to the constitution; the municipality also, nearly about the same period, passed a resolution prohibiting the citizens from keeping stores of concealed arms in their houses.

In one instance, however, it must be confessed, that the Jacobin and republican party evinced superior sagacity, and shewed that they were possessed of either better information, or more honesty, than their opponents. They penetrated more successfully the designs of Leopold, and saw that the false serenity which prevailed at the commencement of the year only preceded a storm; and that it was a mere delusion created by that crafty prince to lull the spirit of France into a fatal tranquillity. Not uninformed probably of the actual grounds of the treaty of Pilnitz, they saw that an alliance of such extent was not likely to vanish in vapour; the reasons still existed in which it originated; with this opinion the prepara-

tions of Austria and Prussia entirely corresponded; and while no motive of sufficient weight had occurred to induce the combination to lay aside their project, there was an obvious reason for the concealment of it, and that was, that it was evidently not yet ripe for execution. At their instance, therefore, the military preparations were carried on with vigour; at their instance a decisive answer was demanded from Leopold, and a period was fixed, after which his silence was to be construed into a declaration of war. The court itself indeed was not without its alarms; for marshals Luckner and Rochambeau, and M. la Fayette, were ordered to Paris, towards the latter end of February, to concert with the executive power concerning the proper arrangements for the defence of the country; a considerable promotion of officers was made, and even a marine equipment was ordered, in expectation that some naval power might be induced to join the confederacy. What was scarcely conjecture in the preceding month, was converted almost into certainty on the 2d of March, when the minister for foreign affairs laid before the assembly the late correspondence with the emperor. Besides the papers which we have already noticed, it included a note from prince Kaunitz, dated January 5th, 1792, stating, that though the elector of Treves had seriously resolved to enforce the regulations adopted by the emperor against the emigrants, still the French king had assembled three armies, and that violent declamations had been permitted in the French clubs against all the sovereigns in Europe.

The reading of this paper was followed by an extract from the instructions of the minister to M. Noailles, the French ambassador at Vienna, dated January 21st, in which an explanation was required of the orders given to general Bender, and of the meaning of the expression employed by the emperor—"The sovereigns united for the safety and honour of crowns."

The most important paper, however, was a dispatch from prince Kaunitz to the imperial chargé des affaires at Paris, and dated February 17th. It was penned

with studied ambiguity—The emperor made many protestations of his desire to preserve peace, but still avowed the engagements which he had formed with other powers for preserving inviolate the monarchy of France. While he professed his apprehensions for the safety of the king, the dispatch was charged with such expressions as appeared studiously calculated to irritate the people, and precipitate his ruin. It inveighed, in the most unqualified terms, against the republican spirit, and the Jacobin societies; and instead of soothing or conciliating the passions of the multitude, it appeared only calculated to urge them to some act of desperation.

These papers were accompanied by a letter from the Prussian envoy at Paris, avowing the intimate union and connexion which subsisted between the two courts, and the entire acquiescence of his master in the Austrian memorials. By another communication from the minister, it was understood, that the imperial troops in the Netherlands amounted to fifty-five thousand, in January, and that as soon as they should be joined by the several bodies which were ordered to march, they would amount to upwards of ninety thousand. The minister concluded by saying, that the king had instructed his ambassador at Vienna to represent, that it became neither the dignity nor the independence of France to enter into any discussion concerning her internal affairs; that the measures of Austria and Prussia, having no explicit object, could only serve to create jealousy and distrust; and that, if the emperor was sincere in his professions, he would shew it by reducing his troops in the Netherlands to the peace establishment in 1791, which would be immediately followed by a similar proceeding on the part of the French.

The fallacious calm which had pervaded the nation and the assembly, was, on the publication of these dispatches, changed into a tempest of rage and resentment. The minister, Delessart, was charged with having deceived the nation; the various communications from foreign powers were treated as little better than forge-

ties, and the minister for foreign affairs was considered as being a party in the fraud : to many it appeared, that war itself was a less formidable evil than the enormous expences which a continued state of alarm involved the nation ; and some even went so far as to regard the menaces of the confederacy as empty threats ; and as concerted solely to increase the distresses of the nation, by deranging its finances.

While the indignation of the popular party in the assembly was directed against M. Bertrand, minister of the marine, and M. Delessart, minister for foreign affairs, the court, under the influence, as was confidently suspected, of the house of Austria, determined on the dismissal of M. Narbonne from the war department ; and of M. Cahier de Gerville from that of the interior. M. de Grave was appointed as successor to M. Narbonne, whose dismissal was both resented and resisted by the leading members of the assembly. M. Sage moved, " that M. Narbonne carried with him the regret of the national assembly ;" and on a motion of censure, by M. Cambon, on the ministers who advised the king to retain M. Bertrand in his service, after he had lost the public confidence, M. Cahier de Gerville was expressly excepted. Nothing indeed could be more impolitic in the court than both these measures. It was as absurd as it was useless to endeavour to support the minister of marine, however innocent, against the voice and feelings of a majority of the legislature ; and considering that the temper of the assembly rather led them in general to derange the ministry, than to vote for their continuance in office, the king ought to have rejoiced that any of his servants enjoyed a portion of their confidence, and ought certainly not to have set them the example himself of dissolving the administration.

These measures were followed, in the same sitting, by the impeachment of M. Delessart. He was accused by M. Brissot of omitting to give information to the assembly of the concert formed among foreign powers against the liberty and independence of France ; of not pressing the measures proper for the safety and defence

of the nation; of having given to prince Kaunitz details on the situation of the kingdom, calculated to convey an improper idea; of having meanly sued for peace; and of having refused to obey the decrees of the national assembly. In consequence of a decree passed against him, M. Delessart was apprehended, and conducted to Orleans to be tried by the high national court. There is every reason to believe that this unfortunate minister was substantially innocent; but the tide of faction, from a variety of unfavourable circumstances, ran hard against him. He may indeed be considered as having fallen a sacrifice to the indignation which the crooked and deceitful conduct of Leopold excited; to the temporizing politics of the mild and undecided Louis; and to that finess which has been so long attached to the French character, that perhaps even republican sentiments will not easily eradicate it. These circumstances prevented him from acting with that decisive openness, and boldness of character, which the rectitude of his conduct might have inspired. He was the first victim to that desperate faction which has since deluged France with blood; and the assembly, by passing a decree of accusation against a citizen, without first hearing him in his own defence, have fixed an indelible blot upon their records, and afforded a fatal specimen of that prompt and hasty punishment which has since exhibited the juridical proceedings of that nation as an object of detestation and contempt to the world.

The impeachment of M. Delessart so completely terrified the marine minister, M. Bertrand, that he lost no time in requesting leave to give in his resignation. Thus the ministry was at once completely dissolved; and yet, unpermanent and difficult as the situation was, the contest to supply the vacant offices served still farther to divide the distracted empire.

While France was thus agitated by internal faction, and the apprehension of a foreign attack, the politics of Europe once more appeared to vibrate in favour of peace, by the sudden death of the emperor of Germany. This event happened on the first of March; and from

the suddenness of the attack, and the nature of the complaint, violent suspicions were at first entertained that he owed his death to poison. The complaint entirely affected the stomach and the intestines, his body swelled to an enormous degree, and his bowels literally burst. The accusation of poison was naturally directed against the French party; but the whole suspicion was soon removed by the narrative of his disease, which was published by authority, and which ascribed the fatal event to a rheumatic fever.—By those, however, who pretended to have better means of information, it was asserted, that the use of certain stimulant medicines, which this prince was in the habit of employing, produced this dreadful effect, and terminated a life of such apparent importance to the politics of Europe.

As a man, Leopold was generally considered as a debauched and sensual character; as a prince, he was certainly possessed of ability; and though his principles were despotic, it must be confessed, that in general he made use of his power for the good of his subjects.—His political career, while grand duke of Tuscany, was marked by wisdom and moderation. He simplified the laws, he remitted the most grievous of the public burdens, and his regard to the administration of justice was such, that he allowed, and even encouraged, appeals to himself, wherever any party conceived himself injured in the course of a process in the ordinary courts of law. He had the merit of restoring peace to the empire, as well as to Austria and the Netherlands, notwithstanding the distress and confusion in which he found them all involved, by the imprudent administration of his predecessor. His political wisdom and general sagacity were certainly far above the ordinary standard of hereditary monarchs. The soundness of his judgment, and his regard to his people, were strongly evinced by one trait—he loved peace. How far his conduct in uniting with the confederacy of princes against the liberties of France, may be fairly cited in contradiction to this assertion, we are scarcely qualified to decide, unless we were better informed as to the mo-

tives and the extent of that confederacy. Leopold might be influenced by family considerations; he might be deceived with false representations as to the actual state of France; he might be prompted by the intrigues of another power, whose insidious policy Europe will long have occasion to regret: or, after all, he might not be serious in his intentions of commencing offensive measures, and might flatter himself that the dread of a powerful combination might enable him to obtain better terms for the royal family than the constitution of 1789 afforded. With all his public virtues, we are under a necessity of recording one indelible blemish on his character—His notorious duplicity rendered him at once an object of universal abhorrence and contempt; and it was even asserted, by an eminent speaker in the British senate, intimately connected with administration, that “no man would take his word for a single day.”

The ascendancy which the Jacobin club had obtained by their victory over the Feuillans, and still more by the impeachment of M. Delessart, rendered their authority absolute in every thing that concerned the politics of France. The court seemed at this moment to relinquish every thought of resistance, and to sail with the tide. This was soon evinced in the appointment of ministers; M. Dumourier and M. Lacoste, two of the leading Jacobins, being nominated to the vacant departments of foreign affairs and the marine. As the name of the former will frequently occur in the course of our narrative, we embrace the opportunity of his first appearance in a public capacity, to give some account of this extraordinary character.

M. Dumourier was born about the year 1739, and is, we have been informed, of a noble but not an opulent family. His father was a *commisnaire de guerre*, and was a man of education and considerable talents, as is evident from a translation of the *Secchia rapita* of Tassoni, and some other poems, which have preserved his name in the annals of literature. As it was almost a point of necessity, that every gentleman in France,

under the old government, should be at one time or other of his life a soldier, young Dumourier commenced his military career at a very early period, and was wounded and made prisoner in the battle of Closter camp. By nature enterprising and active, the next opportunity that offered for the display of his distinguished talents was in the year 1770, when the first infamous partition of Poland was planned and executed by a banditti of despots; on this occasion, M. Dumourier appeared on the side of liberty, at the head of a battalion of French volunteers, and is said to have performed some desperate and able services to the republic. The event of that unpropitious contest is too well known, and too deeply lamented by every friend of justice and of freedom. M. Dumourier had, however, so far succeeded for his personal views, that he was immediately noticed by Louis XV. and was sent into Sweden in 1772, with M. Favier and two others, confidentially by the king, and unknown to the ministry, when the great revolution was to be effected in that kingdom; the plan of which was laid in the cabinet of Versailles. Dumourier contrived to convey private intelligence to the king, that the object was effected, before the ministers had received any dispatch from their agents. His promptitude and ability, however, only served to awaken the jealousy of the courtiers, and on his return, in reward for his services, he was committed to the Bastille. His continuance there, we have reason to think, was however not long.

In the late war, M. Dumourier was lieutenant governor of Cherburgh, and is said to have offered a plan to the minister, M. Vergennes, by which he undertook, with a handful of men, to surprise the island of Jersey and the other British possessions in that quarter; but, for what reason we know not, the proposal was rejected.

From the first dawn of the revolution, M. Dumourier studied to ingratiate himself with the people; and, to render himself more acceptable to them, is said to have disclaimed the nobility of his ancestry. As the

Jacobin club was the great theatre for talents and ambition, he soon became an active and distinguished member, and by their influence established himself in the important, and, at this period, very responsible situation of minister for foreign affairs.

The French king, as a further testimony of his attention to the will of the people, dismissed the Swiss guards on the 17th of March; and on that day the guard appointed by the constitution entered upon duty.

The death of the emperor, instead of protracting, appears to have accelerated hostilities between Austria and France. The young king of Hungary, Francis I. was scarcely seated upon the throne, when he desired a conference with the Prussian minister, Bischoffwerder, and directed him to inform his master, that he was determined strictly and literally to adhere to the convention of Pilnitz. The preparations on the part of the French, in the mean time, proceeded with alacrity; and the new minister, M. Dumourier, declared in the Jacobin club, that he would, in his negotiations with Austria, direct them to the point of obtaining, without delay, a solid peace or a decisive war.

On the 22d of March a decree of sequestration was passed against the property of the emigrants, saving however the right of creditors to be reimbursed their demands; and such as returned within the space of one month were to be re-established in the possession of their estates, subjected, however, to a proportionate tax to defray the expences of the armament, which their emigration had occasioned. By an additional decree, they were deprived of the rights of active citizens for two years after their return to France; and such of them as should not return within a month, were deprived of those privileges for ten years.

The succeeding day, the king announced the appointment of three more of the popular party to the ministry, viz. M. Garnier, minister of justice, in the room of M. Duport du Tertre; M. Roland, minister of the interior, instead of M. Cahier de Gerville; and M.

Claviere, minister of finance, in the room of M. Tarbe. The new ministers were all members of the Jacobin club, which at this period seems to have possessed the entire confidence of the nation. The vigorous measures pursued by the assembly had also the happiest effects both upon public credit and upon the minds of the emigrants, upwards of four hundred having passed through Lisle, on their return, in one day.

END OF THE FIRST VOLUME.

